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ABSTRACT

This newsletter covers issues and activities related to writing across the curriculum, literacy, and English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) education. Articles include "Language Testing and Minorities," "Writing and Talking in Early Childhood Education," "Announcing a Centre for Literacy," "The Literacy of Thoughtfulness: What We Want from Graduates," "Writing in Schools and Colleges: A Quebec Study," and "French Mother-tongue Literacy in Canada." In these issues, a regular section, "In the Classroom" is devoted mainly to discussions by and about teachers who have made effective use of writing journals in courses across several disciplines. The newsletter also contains a schedule of educational conferences and workshops, and announcements, some annotated, of recent publications in the field. (JL) (Adjunct ERIC Clearinghouse on Literacy Education)

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Literacy Across the Curriculum:
Language for Learning, Vol. 5

FL800239

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Dawson College Dec. 1988 Vol. 5 No.2

Literacy across the curriculum

Language For Learning

Language, testing and minorities

Language can never be neutral and testing can never be apolitical. When tests are used to systematically exclude minorities from educational or job opportunities, the motives that underly the testing policy must be exposed. In the United States today, some commentators say, testing is being used as a subtle instrument of racism.

At the 1988 conference of the National Council of Teachers of English, in St. Louis, Professor Johnny Tolliver of Norfolk, Virginia, presented a disturbing analysis of American testing patterns. Despite years of protest by researchers and community leaders, he said, Black and Hispanic children as early as kindergarten are still given culturally biased tests and streamed into non-academic classes that guarantee they will never develop the literacy or numeracy skills needed to eventually pursue a professional education. According to Tolliver, himself a Harvard graduate, the recent penchant for "raising standards" has lead to a drop in minority candidates at mainstream American universities because many students cannot pass the standarized literacy tests being used more and more frequently as part of admissions criteria. Statistically, the majority of Black university graduates still come from Black universities. Tolliver called for an end to the widespread reliance on standardized testing that he claims has replaced older, more overt forms of racism in the United States.

Whether exclusion through testing comes about as the result of deliberate policy or as the byproduct of poorly conceived policy, the outcome is the same for the victim. Quebec provides a recent example of the second instance. In 1976, when Bill 101 made French the official language in Quebec and forced all immigrants, except those whose own education had been in English, to enrol their children in French schools, many of these children found themselves in special education classes because they could not perform on French language tests. Although it took the schools several years to recognize the injustice, they did acknowledge it and are still trying to provide the supports needed by these children to learn in French. Despite these efforts, until now many of the "101" children coming out of high school are not proficient in French, English, or their mother-tongue. No one yet knows what this will mean for their future educational and job opportunities. At the least, it will call for extensive "remediation" in the colleges or eventual adult education upgrading.

Extend the list. Immigrant and French students in English schools in the nine other Canadian provinces; native students across the country; foreign students applying to colleges and universities. Language tests are used to diagnose, to place, to monitor; they are also used to stream, to fail, and to exclude.

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LETTERS

Dear Linda,

I was very interested in the report on "Science, Language, and Teaching," and would like to obtain a copy of the APU pamphlet that is mentioned. Can you provide an address to directly obtain it, please?

I would also like to know whether your audience includes elementary and secondary schools or whether your principal focus is on college and adult literacy education? I am particularly interested in developing secondary school WAC programs and would like to know if and where they exist.

I look forward to an interesting association with LAC

Sincerely,
Wendy Strachan
Vancouver

Dear Linda,

Thanks very much for opening your office to me. I have enjoyed reading the copies I made of your articles on language and science. They will be useful references for my Concordia University instructional design project.

Sincerely,
Mark Shefler
Science Department
Lower Canada College

Dear Linda,

I should like to present a view which I know is shared by most of my colleagues in the English Department.

How can you, as editor, allow such non-words as "problematize" and "orality" to appear in your journal without comment? Your role is to support literacy throughout the curriculum. Such abuse of language, such jargon, such awful educationalese should be tolerated by no-one. Please draw the line and edit. You do not have to accept just any kind of sub-educationalese schlock. Good writing and clear thinking go together. What meaning, otherwise, has literacy?

Keep up the good work, but I mean good.

Your sincerely,
David Price
English Department
Dawson College

NOTICE
Study on Use of Student Journals/ Logs

Cegep teachers willing to answer a questionnaire for a study on the use of student logs (from a writing-to-learn focus), are asked to give their names to:
Linda Shohet
Dawson College
Room 4B 1
3040 Sherbrooke Street W.
Montreal, Quebec H3Z 1A4
or contact directly:
Louise Ménard
3220 Cap à l'Aigle
Duvernay, Laval, H7E 1C9
664-1833.

Language and testing

Continued from page 1

At the end of 1988, Canada faces a constitutional crisis brought on by a conflict between language and minority rights. Perhaps it takes a crisis to force a country to recognize that language and the issues connected to it are at the core of a nation's identity and that language injustice reveals much deeper social and political flaws. The question is, if the recognition takes place, is it necessarily followed by a national will to correct the source of the injustice?

Language injustice takes different forms in different societies. In the short term, educators are always asked to undo the damage to the victims, if the damage is not irreparable. Eventually the entire society pays the price.

L.S.

Literacy Across the Curriculum
Dawson College
3040 Sherbrooke Street W.
Room 4B 1.9
Montreal, Quebec, Canada
H3Z 1A4

Editor
Linda Shohet
Design and Layout
Janice Bernath

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Writing and talking in Early Childhood Education:

I. Molly Knoll, Early Childhood Education Program, Vanier College, Montreal

Assignments

"Observing and Reporting" is a first-year course in the Early Childhood Education Program at Vanier College. It requires students to sharpen their acuity and writing skills by recording young children's behaviour in a group setting, in this case the Early Childhood Education Laboratory Centre. The students' growing awareness as they focus on both group and individual behaviour needs to be reflected in descriptive and detailed reports. What they observe, they need to record clearly, effectively and objectively. I have devised a series of writing exercises to help them develop their ability to observe and record.

Early in the semester I ask students to write ten statements recording first impressions of college life in their first week as students. During class, they exchange their lists in pairs, discuss and assess similarities and differences, and note the aspects missed by either member of the pair. Students are alerted to personal perceptions and preferences and how these influence written expression.

Applying these insights, students write narratives while observing the children and self-edit their narratives from free-flow descriptions to comprehensible, objective reports. The next step is another in-class exchange of a short report on an individual child. These anecdotes are written on two-part paper. On the same sheet, critics write their comments, which include questions about clarity, objectivity and assumptions as well as remarks and a critique of the writers' communication skills. This is a positive method of response as students' critical comments are directed to each other and are not connected to marks. I read both the anecdote and the critique, focusing particularly on clarity of expression.

As outcomes of these exercises, students

1. gain observational insight;
2. expand and use appropriate vocabulary;
3. improve grammar;
4. increase awareness of the difference between objective and subjective statements; and
5. build trust with classmates.

Students reporting and documenting the behaviour of an individual child use the data to draw informal conclusions about children in group settings and to increase their own understanding of child deveopment.

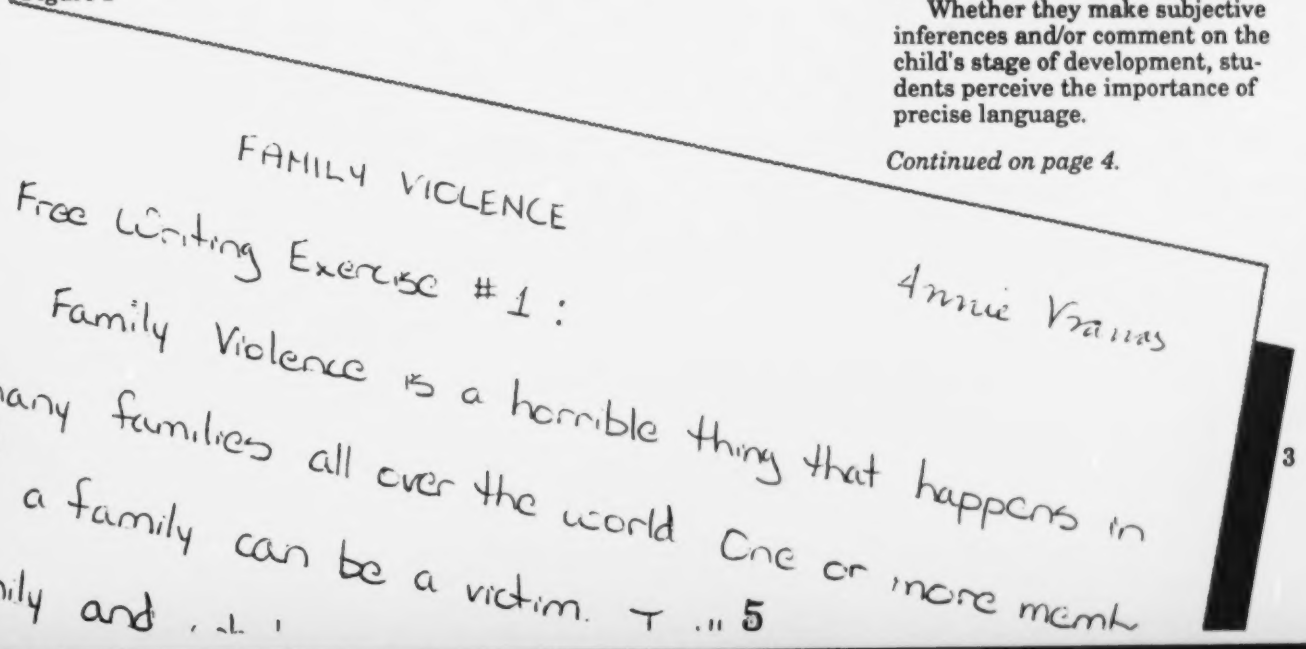
Examples of informal conclusions drawn by Early Childhood students:

- "X" needs personal attention when separating from his mother and entering the room. [This conclusion is totally subjective.]
- "Y" has fine motor-control when cutting with child-size scissors. [This conclusion is based on knowledge of developmental stages and uses the formal term "fine motor-control."]
- "Z" can engage in dramatic play for 18 minutes when taking a lead role. [This conclusion combines a formal observation about "dramatic play" with a subjective inference.]

Whether they make subjective inferences and/or comment on the child's stage of development, students perceive the importance of precise language.

Continued on page 4.

Figure 1


FAMILY VIOLENCE

Free Writing Exercise #1:

Annie Vranas

Family Violence is a horrible thing that happens in many families all over the world. One or more member in a family can be a victim. T ... 5 family and ...

II. Selma Tischer, Early Childhood Education Program, Vanier College, Montreal

Assignments

I would like to present a series of assignments that incorporate some of the techniques introduced by Toby Fulwiler in the two workshops he led in Montreal in 1986-1987. The assignments, part of a health course taught in the Early Childhood Education Program at Vanier College, focus on family violence and child abuse.

Preliminary work on this topic incorporates free writing. Students then write several short essays before finally preparing a formal paper on child abuse. Freewriting is used with two specific goals in mind. The first is to help the students start the assignment and overcome initial writer's block; the second goal is to help students approach the difficult subject of family violence and child abuse. I feel that freewriting is particularly useful in dealing with these topics. (See figure 1.)

The basic postulate underlying the current approach to child abuse is that one's child rearing and educational practices are influenced to a certain degree by the rearing practices one has been subjected to as a child. It is now acknowledged that a large percentage of child abusers were themselves victims of abuse in their childhood. When the victims become parents or educators, these problems resurface and there is a tendency for them to become abusers. Becoming aware of this problem and healing the psychological scars seem to be effective means to stop the vicious cycle of violence. Although few students have experienced extreme violent behaviours, a lot of them seem to struggle with the results of rearing practices that did not respect their needs as children.

Through free writing, students are drawn into their past. For many students, this experience is a positive one as they realize how much of their past experience is still part of the present and may impair their self-actualization.

The first writing assignments follow Toby Fulwiler's suggested guidelines: they are done in class and students may share their writing on a voluntary basis. This technique is especially appropriate given the delicate topic involved. Usually only a few students initially share their writing. As the feedback they get is positive and their peers are supportive, more and more join the sharing process. In a second stage, students write short essays to be shared in small groups. We read the essay to two students who must respond with one comment and two questions.

Some problems

The difficulty the students have at this stage is making the link between a very personal piece of writing and the more formal reading materials. They get some help finding appropriate sources from class discussions, from sharing resources and from my suggestions. From the beginning of the semester, I tell them to collect articles, news clippings, and any other relevant material on family violence, some of it from their other courses.

I must admit that the final results of the course are not perfect.

I have received papers that relate very personal and often painful experiences; there is just not enough time to help these students through the process of assimilating these experiences and distancing themselves to integrate their readings and write objectively about family violence.

The time factor seems to be essential in this type of assignment. Some students would need the whole semester before they could clarify their experiences. What is important is that the process gets started and that the students have the opportunity to express themselves. Some of them choose to share their experiences with me, which I think is one of the most important and rewarding aspects of this series of assignments.

Literacy Across the Curriculum Workshops / Winter 1989
Intensive two-day workshops.
*PERFORMA credits available

Designing Brief Writing Assignments in all Disciplines
Leader: Harvey S. Wiener, CUNY
Dates: Friday, Saturday
February 3-4, 1989
Time: 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
Place: Dawson College, Atwater campus, Room 5B15

Recent studies have shown that students learn more from doing several brief assignments than they do from writing extended papers at end of semester. This workshop will focus on the design of brief guided assignments that help students understand course content and give teachers an opportunity to monitor student learning. Participants will work in collaborative groups to develop tasks for use in their own classrooms in the winter semester.

Writing to Learn: Ungraded Writing
Leader: Toby Fulwiler,
University of Vermont
Dates: Friday, Saturday
February 24-25, 1989
Time: 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Ungraded, informal writing can be worked into any course as a way of helping students think through their problems and questions on paper.

Without significently increasing workload, teachers can incorporate daily writing that leads students to later formal assignments. Participants will examine samples from a range of disciplines and hear from teachers who have adjusted the design of their courses to accommodate more informal writing to learn.

*Teachers who want to register for credits should contact Katie Nicholls, 931-8731, local 1412. Non-credit registrants, call local 1414.

One-Day Workshop
Non-credit
Peer Tutoring as a Classroom Technique
Leaders: Joan McKibbon, St. Lawrence College, Kingston
Rozanne Goldman, Learning Centre, Dawson College
Date: Friday, March 10, 1989
Time: 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Peer tutoring is one means of reorganizing the classroom to transfer more responsibility to students. But it does not mean simply pairing a strong student with a weaker one to imitate teacher-student roles. Peer tutoring needs organization and supervision and an understanding the theory behind it. In this session, the leaders will present two succesful models, one concentrating on writing, the other on second language work. They will discuss issues of training, organization and funding. Tutors will share some of their experiences.

We regularly list recent acquisitions in the LAC office. These may be borrowed by dropping in to Atwater, Room B451, or by calling 931-8731, local 1411.

Goodman, Kenneth S., *Miscue Analysis: Applications to Reading Instruction*, ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills, NCTE, March 1981.

Purves, Alan C., NCTE Research Report No. 20, *Reading and Literature: American Achievement in International Perspective*, NCTE 1981.

Hillocks, George, editor, *The English Curriculum Under Fire: What Are The Real Basics?*, NCTE 1982.

Diederich, Paul B., *Measuring Growth in English*, NCTE 1974.

Applebee, Arthur N., *Tradition and Reform in the Teaching of English: A History*, NCTE 1974

Gere, Ann Ruggles, *Writing Groups: History, Theory and Implications*, Southern Illinois University Press 1987.

Coe, Richard M., *Toward a Grammar of Passages*, Southern Illinois University Press, 1988.

Berlin, James A., *Rhetoric and Reality: Writing Instruction in American Colleges, 1900-1985*, Southerin Illinois University Press, 1987.

Witte, Stephen P. and Faigley, Lester, *Evaluating College Writing Programs*, Southern Illinois University Press, 1983.

Halpern, Jeanne W. and Liggett, Sarah, *Computers and Composing*, Southern Illinois University Press, 1984.

Voices: New writers for new readers

This magazine arrived in the mail earlier this fall with a cover letter from editor Lee Weinstein identifying the publication's two goals: to provide reading material for new adult readers and to provide assistance for tutors involved with reading and writing instruction. *Voices* reflects the belief that "curriculum and instructional approach should be learner-centred."

Produced by the Lower Mainland Society for Literacy and Employment in Surrey B.C., this attractive desktop publication offers stories and poems by literacy students, commentary by the students on their development as writers and articles by instructors. The layout, readable typeface, photographs and clean black-and-white illustrations make the text extremely inviting. The quality of the writing is inspiring, from the tentative "First Words" in the beginning section, to the startling control of writers like S.B., who in "Transitions: Later Writings" explores the past:

In My Past
In my past:
I was free with the knowledge of how to use my language. I was not free to write everything that was in my mind.

In my present:
I am free to write everything that is in my mind, but I am not free in using English.

In my own language I can fly.
In English I hardly crawl in my writing.

Sometimes I feel like a fish which at any moment will drown. I just wish to learn how to swim or fly in English, also.

Voices : New Writers for New Readers is published quarterly and can be ordered from the Lower Mainland Society for Literacy and Employment, 14525 110A Avenue, Surrey B.C., Canada, V3R 2B4. Tel.: (604) 584-5424.

1 On writing for one's age

A book has its absolute value within the age. It is lived like an outbreak, like a famine. With much less intensity, to be sure, and by fewer people, but in the same way. It is an emanation of intersubjectivity, a living bond of rage, hatred, or love among those who produce it and those who receive it. If it succeeds in commanding attention, thousands of people reject it and deny it: as everybody knows, to read a book is to rewrite it. *At the time* it is at first a panic or an evasion or a courageous assertion; at the time it is a good or bad *action*. Later on, when the age is done with, it will enter into the relative, it will become a message. But the judgments of posterity will not invalidate those that were passed on it in its lifetime. I have often been told about bananas and dates: "You don't know anything about them. In order to know what they are, you have to eat them on the spot. when they've just been picked." And I have always considered bananas as dead fruit whose real, live taste escapes me. Books that are handed down from age to age are dead fruit. They had in another time another taste, tart and tangy. *Emile* or *The Persian Letters* should have been read when they were freshly picked.

Thus, one must write for one's age, as the great writers have done. But that does not mean that one has to lock oneself up in it. To write for one's age is not to reflect it passively; it is to want to maintain it or change it; thus, to go beyond it toward the future. It is this effort to change one's age that places us most deeply within it, for it is never reducible to the dead ensemble of tools and customs; it is in movement; it is constantly surpassing itself; the concrete present and the living future of all the people who compose it coincide rigorously within it.

Jean Paul Sartre,"Writing for One's Age," *Harper's* (November, 1988) 32.

2 On human error

Mistakes are at the very base of human thought, embedded there, feeding the structure like root nodules. If we were not provided with the knack of being wrong, we could never get anything useful done. We think our way along by choosing between right and wrong alternatives, and the wrong choices have to be made as frequently as the right ones. We get along in life thisway. We are built to make mistakes, coded for error.

We learn, as we say, by "trial and error." Why do we always say that? why not "trial and rightness" or "trial and triumph"? The old phrase puts it that way because that is, in real life, the way it is done.

A good laboratory, like a good bank or a corporation or government, has to run like a computer. Almost everything is done flawlessly, by the book, and all the numbers add up to the predicted sums. The days go by. And then, if it is a lucky day, and a lucky laboratory, somebody makes a mistake: the wrong buffer, something in one of the blanks, a decimal misplaced in reading counts, the warm room off by a degree and a half, a mouse out of his box, or just a misreading of the day's protocol. Whatever, when the results come in, something is obviously screwed up, and then the action can begin.

The misreading is not the important error; it opens the way. The next step is the crucial one. If the investigator can bring himself to say, "But even so, look at that!" then the new finding, whatever it is, is ready for snatching. What is needed, for progress to be made, is the move based on error.

Lewis Thomas "To Err is Human," *The Medusa and the Snail* (Bantam: Toronto; New York 1986): 30.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Attention Computer Users
Call for Papers
NCTE has given preliminary approval to a new book on computer uses in the English class.
Lesson Plans for the Computer Age / A Teacher's Guide to Computer Activities in English / Language Arts Classrooms, edited by William Wresch, University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point.

There are books available describing computer programs available for use in English/Language Arts instruction, but no book that describes how computers are being used day-to-day in classrooms-e.g. in introductory poetry instruction or in improving or revising of texts.

This book will collect 50-60 descriptions of lesson plans using the computer in the English class. Emphasis will be on grades 6-12, but unique applications in other grades will also be considered.

For more information, write: William Wresch. Chair, Department of Mathematics and Computing, University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point, Stevens Point, WI 54481, (715) 346-2120

Call for Papers
Computers & Composition invites readers to submit papers for an issue entitled **"Questions for the 1990's"** to be published in March/April 1990.

Two-page abstracts for papers should be submitted to Gail Hawisher, English Department, Illinois State University, Normal, IL 61761. Deadline: February 15, 1989. Papers will be reviewed by members of the *Computers & Composition* Editorial Board, and final submissions invited by June 1, 1989.

Computers in Writing-intensive Classrooms
Featuring Dr. Cynthia Selfe
June 19-30, 1989
Michigan Technological University
Houghton, Michigan
This is a two-week workshop for English teachers wanting to incorporate computers into their writing intensive classroom. The workshop will consist of ten, six-hour work days. In addition to regularly scheduled sessions, the computer lab will be open and staffed during the evenings.
Contact:
Susan Bucheger, Coordinator
Division of Education and Public Services
Michigan Technological University
Houghton, MI 49931
(906) 487-2262

Call for Papers
Council of Writing Program Administrators Summer Conference. July 26-28, 1989, Miami University in Oxford, Ohio. Sessions will consist of workshops, papers, and informal discussions or panels on topics pertinent to the administration of writing programs: establishing and sustaining a cohesive program, staffing, budgeting, training teachers, testing and evaluating students, working with other administrators, running a computer lab or a writing center, and so on.

For information write:
WPA Annual Conference
Jeffrey Sommers, Program Chair
Department of English
Miami University
Middletown, OH 45042

Call for Papers
The 5th Computers and Writing Conference
May 12-14, 1989
Sponsored by The University of Minnesota, Gallaudet University and the Bread Loaf School of English with support from the Annenberg/CPB Project.
Send proposals to:
Geoffrey Sirc
University of Minnesota
120 Nicholson Hall
216 Pillsbury Drive S.E.
Minneapolis, MN 55455

Second Annual Wyoming Whole Language Conference
June 26-30, 1989
University of Wyoming
More information is available from :
Roseine Church or Vince Sindt,
Wyoming Center for Teaching and Learning
Box 3992 Univ. Station,
University of Wyoming,
Laramie, WY 82071
766-6381

Michigan State University
Department of English
English Education in Australia: Reading and Writing in Sydney
June 23-July 21, 1990
6 Graduate Credits
For more information write to:
Stephen Tchudi and Marilyn Wilson
Department of English,
Michigan State University,
East Lansing, MI 48824-1036

Teaching ESL in the CEGEP
A Day of Intensive Workshops
Friday, January 13, 1989
Dawson College
3040 Sherbrooke Street W.
Montreal, Quebec, H3Z 1A4
8:00 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

NTNW
Annual Conference on Writing Assessment
Dawson College
Montreal, Quebec
Conference, April 9-11, 1989

An international exhange among elementary, secondary, and postsecondary teachers, administrators, and test developers.

Registration is limited to 700 participants. Before March 9, 1989, the fee is $100 US/ $125 Canadian. After March 9, 1989, The fee is $120 US/ $150 Canadian.

Pre-Conference Workshops:
Saturday, April 8
9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
A. Computers in Writing
Leaders: Helen Schwartz & Michael Spitzer
B. Large-Scale Writing Assessment
Leader: Edward White

Post-ConferenceWorkshops:
Wednesday, April 12
9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
C. Portfolio Assessment
Leaders: John Dixon & Peter Elbow
D. Writing Assessment Across Cultures
Leaders: Alan Purves and colleagues
also:

- A "Section française" .
- Informal round-table exchanges on selected topics over lunchtime, Monday, April 10.
- A three-hour forum of representatives from Canadian Education ministries, Monday P.M.

For information and registration forms, call (514) 931-8731, local 1414.

1990, International Literacy Year

As part of a worldwide strategy to combat illiteracy, International Literacy Year (ILY) will address the particular needs of developing countries, where illiteracy is closely related to underdevelopment and poverty, as well as industrialized coujtries, where functional illiteracy is a growing problem.
International Task Force on Literacy Coordination Office
720 Bathurst Street, Ste. 500
Toronto, Ontario, Canada M5S 2R4
(416) 588-1211
FAX (416) 588-5725

Academic Alliance of English Teachers
Portfolio: Formative Assessment.
Wednesday, February 1, 1989
7:30 p.m. - 9:30 p.m.
Dawson College
3040 Sherbrooke Street W.
Montreal, Quebec

LASSA
Learning and Study Skills Association
Spring Conference
Sessions on Study Skills Counselling for ESL Students
and on Critical Thinking
May 26, 1989
Dawson College, Montreal
For details, call Carol Potter, 931-8731, local 1291

Native Literacy
"Proceedings of the Native Adult English Literacy Conference" held in Vancouver, B. C., on April 20 - 21, 1988, are available from the LAC office. They outline the schedule of presentations, minutes of several sessions, and recommmendations. The two days were devoted to close examination of the literacy needs of native Canadians from a native perspective. Recommendations centre on the changes in policy and program required if those needs are ever to be truly addressed.

Feminist Perspectives on Reading and Writing

A special double issue of *Inkshed*, the newsletter of the Canadian Association for the Study of Writing and Reading, is devoted to feminist perspectives. For subscriptions send a cheque for $7., payable to: "The University of Alberta-Inkshed," to:
Kay L. Stewart, Editor, Inkshed,
Department of English,
University of Alberta,
Edmonton, AB T6G 2E5

ALPHA 88, Recherches en alphabétisation, edited by Jean-Paul Hautecoeur of the Quebec Ministry of Education, focuses on literacy in Switzerland, France, Belgium, Quebec, and Haiti. This series of studies, published biannually for a decade, gathers research reports and essays on literacy in industrialized and underdeveloped countries. The editor provides an introductory overview and extensive bibliographies after each article. A copy is available without cost from Jean-Paul Hautecoeur, Ministère de l'Education, 600, rue Fullum, 4e étage, Montréal, Québec, H2K 4L1.

CONFERENCES

College Composition and Communication
Winter Workshop on Teaching Composition to Undergraduates
January 5-7, 1989
Clearwater Beach, FL

National Association for Developmental Education
13th Annual Conference
Developmental Education: Gateway to the Future
March 2-4, 1989
The Hyatt Regency Hotel
Cincinnati, OH

Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL)
March 6-11, 1989
San Antonio, TX

Conference on College Composition and Communication
March 15-18, 1989

Quebec's Annual Language Arts Conference
Springboards '89
April 13-14, 1989
Palais de Congrés
Montreal, QC
Featured Speakers: Nancie Atwell, Dorothy J. Watson, Gordon Wells

Writing at Banff
The May Writing Studios
April 24 - June 2, 1989.
Radio Drama Workshop
June 5-9, 1989.
Dramatic Writing for Film, T.V. and Theatre Workshop
June 5-16, 1989
Application Deadline for All Writing Programs: January 2, 1989

Association of Canadian Community Colleges National Convention
Renaissance: Innovations in Education
May 29-31, 1989
Regina, SK

Teaching Literature to Undergraduates
June 5-7, 1989
Myrtle Beach, SC

Ninth Annual Conference on
Teaching and Learning in Higher Education
June 17-20, 1989
University of Alberta
Edmonton, AB

The 1989 National Conference on Assessment in Higher Education
June 21-24, 1989
The Atlanta Hilton and Towers, Atlanta, GA
Association for Commonwealth Literature and Language Studies: Commonwealth Connections
August 24-31, 1989
University of Kent

Traverse Bay Writing and Reading Workshops
4th Annual Conference
Current Perspectives on Teaching Writing and Reading
June 25 - June 30, 1989
A five day program workshops, workshops, ideas exchanges, a book exhibit, and social activities. Graduate credits for the full-day workshops. Open to elementary through college.

Martha's Vineyard Summer Workshops
1989 Institute on Writing and Teaching
Session 1, July 2-12
Session 2, July 16-29
Applicants considered on a first-come, first-served basis. Enrollments are limited.

Details of these conferences available in LAC office, 4B1-9, Tel. (514) 931-8731, local 1411.

Literacy Across the Curriculum is published five times during the academic year by the Faculty Development and Research Office of Dawson College.

Single subscription	$ 7.50
Multiple subscription (10)	$30.00
Multiple subscription (20)	$54.00

To be placed on the subscription list, complete this form and mail it with your cheque to:

Literacy Across the Curriculum
Dawson College
3040 Sherbrooke Street West
Montreal, Quebec, Canada, H3Z 1A4

I enclose a cheque for: _$ 7.50
_$30.00
_$54.00

On multiple orders outside Montreal, please add $3.00 additional postage.

Name _____

Institution _____

Address _____

_____

September 1989 Vol. 5 No. 3-4

Literacy across the curriculum

LANGUAGE FOR LEARNING

Announcing A Centre for Literacy

Literacy Across the Curriculum is undergoing a metamorphosis at Dawson College that demands a new introduction. Let me open this issue of the Bulletin by explaining what we were and what we have become.

As part of a Canadian initiative to increase public awareness and raise levels of literacy, the federal Secretary of State through its Literacy Secretariat has awarded Dawson College and The Quebec Association for Adult Learning (QAAL) a three-year grant to establish a Centre for Literacy in the Schools and in the Community. This centre, to be housed at Dawson's Atwater campus, will accumulate resources, offer seminars and workshops, train a corps of teacher-seminar leaders, produce regular newsletters, and, through the development of local, national, and international links, become a meeting ground for exchanges on literacy. All activities of Dawson's Literacy Across the Curriculum (LAC) program that have been addressed to the larger community outside the college have been subsumed by the Centre. Within the college, LAC will maintain projects specifically involving only the institution, such as support in developing departmental guidelines.

To Bulletin subscribers: Because of an equipment failure in early 1989 followed by the negotiations to establish the Centre, we have not published an issue of LAC since December 1988. We are continuing the volume number from that date and honouring all paid subscriptions for 1988-89 until we have finished Volume 5.

What we were

Dawson College has considerable expertise in the field of literacy.

It began its Literacy Across the Curriculum(LAC) project in 1984 to address the issue of literacy within the college. However, as the first LAC program in Quebec and one of the few in Canada, the Dawson program evolved into a centre of professional development activities for teachers in the entire English secondary and post-secondary system of Quebec. Five times a year it produces a Bulletin which is distributed to all teachers in the English colleges and to principals of every English high school in the province. The program also established connections on cooperative projects with several members of Quebec's business community. Internationally, the college co-hosted with the City University of New York a conference on writing assessment in April 1989.

The Quebec Association for Adult Learning(QAAL) is a natural partner in this undertaking. QAAL, alone and as an affiliate of the Canadian Associ-

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The QAAL/Dawson College Centre for Literacy in the Schools and the Community

Where do language tutors go?

During my studies at the Lafontaine Campus of Dawson College, from 1977 to 1979, I had the opportunity to participate in the Learning Centre's English Tutorial Workshop Program. The experience was most rewarding and proved to be a useful introduction to some elements of my present work in the Reference Department of McGill University's McLennan Library.

The English Tutorial Workshop course was designed to provide students with experience in teaching language and study skills. In the classroom component of the course, students reviewed English grammar, writing techniques, and teaching methods; in the practical component of the course, they applied these techniques to instruct the student clients of the Learning Centre. Depending on the needs of the clients, the tutors would plan weekly sessions involving group conversations, writing and grammar assignments, reading exercises and note-taking practice.

Some of these peer-teaching sessions would take place in groups, while other involved one-to-one instruction; at the end of the semester, each tutor would prepare a brief evaluation of his or her clients, and the tutors themselves would be evaluated on their practical and classroom work.

Students who successfully completed the English Tutorial Workshop course -- typically offered in the fall -- would be given the option of working at the Learning Centre during the winter semester as paid tutors.

The two semesters I spent as a Learning Centre tutor were very enjoyable, both for the instruction that the course provided and for the gratification of helping students perfect skills that would assist them in their studies. Although I had not anticipated it at the time, the practical experience that I acquired in the course also proved to be of benefit to me in the field of reference work, since informal instruction and classroom seminars are important components of the reference service provided to library users at McGill.

Marc Richard
McGill University Library

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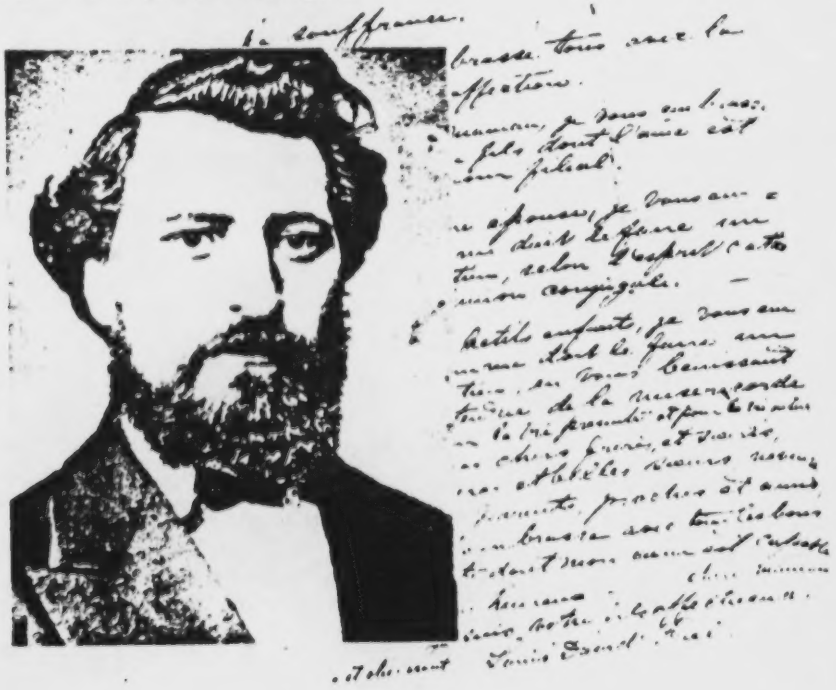
The Centre for Literacy in the Schools and the Community

Writing in the Disciplines: A Brief History Assignment

The assignment highlighted below was refined following a two-day intensive course offered at Dawson College in January 1989 by Harvey S. Wiener on "Developing Brief Writing Assignments Across Disciplines." Unlike most workshops which end leaving many participants inspired but not quite sure whether to do anything about it, the series run by Literacy Across the Curriculum last winter extended the duration of the sessions and brought teachers back together at the end of semester after having tried a particular assignment in the classroom. The participants were unanimous about the benefits of having the same group of colleagues from widely divergent backgrounds meet over time and react to successive drafts of an assignment. For a fuller description of the extended workshop model, see page .

This assignment, developed by Gary Evans for his course, "Canadian History From 1867," has not yet been "classroom-tested" because Gary was on leave last semester to complete a book. Fellow teachers, however, liked it immensely, and are all waiting to find out if Gary's history students of Fall '89 corroborate their judgment.



Louis Riel and his last letter.

The Trial of Louis Riel: You Are The Judge

You are the judge in the trial of Louis Riel in 1885, just preparing to let the jury retire to find its verdict.

A man's life is in the balance. You cannot afford to be sleepy or sloppy.

On two separate pages, list the pros and cons of each of these tiems in a sentence or two:

1. The provocation of William McDougall in 1869
2. The Provisional Government of 1870
3. The execution of Thomas Scott
4. The role of the Catholic Church in 1869
5. The role of the Catholic Church in 1885
6. Riel's mental illness, real or imag ined
7. The amnesty question
8. Indian agitation in the Northwest
9. The supernatural as Riel's guide
10. The federal Government's response to grievance in 1884-85
11. Riel's defence at his trial, contra dicting his attorney
12. Reaction in English Canada to a guilty verdict and hanging
13. Reaction in French Canada to a guilty verdict and hanging
14. The likely longterm effects of a guilty verdict on Canada
15. Your own personal beliefs about Riel and the Rebellion

Remember, you will have to explain them and interpret them to the jury before they reach a verdict. In a separate paragraph (a sentence or two), describe the difference between these two ways of addressing the jury.

You may use your book for consultation. You should do this work at home in about three hours. At the end, write down how long it took to do this assignment.

Gary Evans teaches history at Dawson College. He has written a study of William Grierson and The National Film Board, and has recently completed his second book.

[In the next few issues of the Bulletin, part of In The Classroom *will be devoted to discussions by and about teachers who have made effective use of writing journals in courses across several disciplines.]*

A Mexican Journal: Reflections on the Mexican Revolution

The use of journals has become so widespread in so many disciplines, and sometimes so poorly integrated, that the announcement of a journal requirement on a course outline often raises a suppressed groan from students, "Not another one." But an original creative journal assignment still can elicit deeply engaged writing.

Herman Carter, a professor in the Humanities Department at Dawson College, designed such an assignment for his course, "The Bandit in History," when he asked his students to keep a journal focusing on "Pancho" Villa and the Mexican Revolution particularly as presented by journalist John Reed. Carter gave the assignment significance by offering book prizes and certificates of merit to the authors of the three best journals. These prizes were provided by a local bookstore and Books Canada in Ottawa. Three Dawson English professors and the Learning Centre coordinator agreed to judge.

The Consul General of Mexico in Montreal, Jose Luis Vallarta, accepted an invitation to present the awards at a special ceremony in May attended by classmates, teachers, and college administrators. The Consul General expressed his pleasure at the sensitivity of the student journals. Mexico, he said, is infrequently studied in Canada, and when Mexicans appear in film or literature in North America, it is too often as stereotypes. Assignments such as Professor Carter's help students understand some of the complexities of the other nation with which we share this continent. Not a detail was overlooked that day; after the presentation, a photographer snapped pictures while guests nibbled crudites and sipped wine. It was a rare kind of public celebration of student writing and of the teacher who inspired it.

Pancho Villa

Below are the assignment instructions students received from Professor Carter followed by excerpts from the winning journal.

****

The Assignment:

The journal entries should reflect your understanding or thoughts on the Mexican Revolution as seen by John Reed in his classic, *Insurgent Mexico*. They should focus primarily on the social bandit Francisco "Pancho" Villa and the peons and guerrillas Reed encountered during his five-month stay in northern Mexico between 1913 and 1914.

Several of your entries will offer an interpretation of passages and important chapters in *Insurgent Mexico* as well as a character sketch of Villa the bandit/revolutionary. You will also look at Reed's writing style and his observations of the cataclysmic events which helped shape modern Mexico.

This journal should include a short introduction on the origins of the Mexican Revolution based on: class notes; the PBS documentary seen in class; Sergio Leone's film, "Duck You Sucker;" passages read from Martin Guzman's *Memoirs of Pancho Villa;* and notes taken from Philip Russell's chapter on the revolution in his *Mexico in Transition* and Warren Skaaren's *Pancho Villa's Last Gasp.*

The last three to four pages of this journal should offer some closing thoughts and an appraisal of *Insurgent Mexico.*

First Prize: Carol Green

In Conclusion:

I must admit that I found *Insurgent Mexico* hard to read at times and impossible to put down at others. Sometimes I had to close the book and my eyes because the sadness I felt for the people blurred my vision.

Reed's style of writing does not let one escape the smells, sight, sound and confusion of war. Like the peons, I too wanted to flee to a safer, nicer place but felt trapped and compelled to stay to the end. I was so angered that at times I thirsted for the blood of their enemies.

In the beginning of the book, I felt cheered when Francisco Madero came to power. I thought that at last the common people had a champion who would bring them peace and justice. Instead I found a man of high ideals who lacked the clout to bring about significant changes.

.....

I can't close without mentioning the women of Mexico. All through the book they make their weary trek for water. The Mexican peasant woman is a servant in her house. Reed describes them as being "dumpy and dull, awkward, bowed at the shoulder from much grinding of corn and washing of clothes." They followed their men on foot carrying their cooking utensils or riding in open boxcars regardless of the weather conditions. Unlike the peasant men, the women had little opportunity to vent their frustration, for there were few "soldaderas." Also unlike the men, there is little mention of them displaying any gaiety. Whereas the men, at any chance they got, played cards, gathered to swap stories and sing ballads...

On Insurgent Mexico:

I can't say that this book was a straightforward, journalistic approach to the events of the Mexican Revolution. Perhaps Reed meant it to be, but he lost his heart to the land and his objectivity was thrown to the wind, obscured by the dust. In Reed's own words, "It was a land to love- this Mexico- a land to fight for."

I couldn't fault Reed for his picturesque, poetic prose. He made Mexico mine to see. The villages with "pink and blue and white plastered adobe houses as delicate and ethereal as a village of porcelain."...

I'm sorry to say, but I found some of Reed's characters to be unbelieveable... Jim Tuck in "Two Faces of Romantic Revolution," attests to the fact that Reed was not beyond "embellishing incidents, creating fictitious characters and arbitrarily changing their identities when it suited his purpose." I suppose he had to do this in order to keep his story from becoming a dry documentary.

Reed was determined to get his story. Few journalists covered the revolution from the front lines. In the preface to Reed's book, Waldo Frank describes Reed's fascination by saying, "I can almost see troubadour Reed seeking his lofty princess all over the world, in Mexico, Serbia, Russia... the lady of his sonnets, the Revolution."

continued from page 1

ation for Adult Education, has a history of commitment to adult literacy in its many manifestations. QAAL promotes links among adult educators working in a wide range of settings in schools, community groups, and business and industry.

What we are

Over three years (1989-1992), working from the broadest possible definition of literacy, the Centre for Literacy will concentrate on linking, informing, and teaching those committed to increasing levels of literacy in the schools, the workplace and the community.

We will create a Literacy Resource Area at Dawson College accessible to teachers and volunteers. These resources will include both published and unpublished materials on every aspect of literacy from early childhood to adult basic. Within the coming weeks, we will be communicating with all English Quebec groups involved in literacy in formal or informal settings to ask for suggestions about what resources practitioners would find most useful. We expect to begin operations in early winter 1990 at the start of International Year of Literacy. The Secretary of State anticipates that this resource centre will be part of a network of five such centres in Canada

The Centre will offer literacy training in two ways: we will offer seminars and workshops on effective methods and program design for policy makers and teachers in schools, for staff and volunteers in popular literacy and adult education organizations, and for literacy workers in business and industry training programs. We will also form a corps of resource teachers familiar with new approaches to integrating literacy teaching into all subject areas in schools. The goal is to gather a group of teachers who understand literacy and can sensitize and teach other teachers. The preparation of the first group will take place over a semester using one course release time per teacher starting in winter 1990 with six to eight participants.

We will continue to produce a regular newsletter (LAC Bulletin) for the schools and investigate the possibility of beginning another one addressed to business and industry to heighten awareness and provide examples of models tried elsewhere. Our experience with the LAC Bulletin has been encouraging. Three years ago, few educators in Quebec were talking about literacy across the curriculum as a concept or a possibility. Dawson is the only institution anywhere to use that phrase. Elsewhere in Canada, Britain and the U.S., similar projects have been, and are, called Language Across the Curriculum or Writing Across the Curriculum. We expanded the concept to insist that literacy is multi-faceted and involves the ability to understand information in any form that it appears, that it includes all the language modes and more. Now when we go to education meetings and conferences in Quebec and outside and hear teachers and administrators using the phrase "literacy across the curriculum," we know where it came from, even when they do not. We feel that a similar kind of awareness can be aroused in the business community. The general climate of interest in the entire country makes the task much easier.

One part of the Centre's mandate will be to design a research project on literacy in the workplace that might with imagination and the cooperation of a business partner produce some clarity in an area where received notions and platitudes now seem to dominate.

Overall we are committed to providing a range of responses to the literacy issue, respecting regional expertise acquired through years of struggle in a variety of learning settings. We recognize that in the public domain there is great misunderstanding and oversimplification of issues related to literacy. If we achieve nothing more, we will attempt to reframe some of the questions that are guiding public discourse on literacy and undereducation in the 1990's.

For information on the Centre, please contact Linda Shohet, Director, or Gordon Peffer, Associate Director, at (514) 931-8731.

L.S.

The Literacy of Thoughtfulness: What We Want From Graduates

Writing assessment has become an industry in the United States and threatens to in Canada. As governments increase their demands for accountability on schools and parents want measurable achievement from their children, publishers and testing companies have responded by marketing a bewildering array of commercial test instruments. At the same time serious researchers have continued to study writing in all its variety and complexity in an effort to discover credible ways of measuring such tenuous notions as "writing ability" and "quality of writing."

The National Testing Network in Writing was begun at the City University of New York(CUNY) in 1981 as a way of keeping educators, particularly teachers, aware of what was happening in the field of writing assessment. Over time the network has become a repository of information on testing programs at national, state/provincial, and institutional levels all over North America. It publishes monographs, shares information, and holds an annual conference.

The 1989 conference, co-hosted by CUNY and Dawson College took place in Montreal from April 8-12. More than one hundred presenters and four keynote speakers from Canada, the Unites States, and Europe presided over sixty-three sessions, nine of them in French. Below are excerpts from the opening address, "The Literacy and Evaluation of Thoughtfulness," given by Rexford Brown, Director of Communications, The Education Commission of The States.

....I use the word "thoughtfulness" to embrace a wide variety of things that people mention when they talk about the kinds of students they want to see graduating. They're really the kinds of things you'd like to see in a good mind. A good, well-trained, disciplined, engaging mind of a graduate from school should be good at detecting fallacies, good at building arguments, and very good at critiquing arguments. A good, well-trained, educated mind is a mind of someone who knows the various modes of discourse in the sciences, in the humanities, in the arts, and how in each of these modes of discourse, people define and debate and solve problems. A good mind is creative when necessary and can discover and invent. And certainly a good mind has what they call the "HOTS," the higher order thinking skills--the capacity to analyze information, to synthesize it, to interpret it, to evaluate and judge it.

And increasingly you hear people saying that a good mind is capable of meta-cognition--thinking about thinking, thinking about the strategies and tactics of solving problems whether they are well-defined or ill-defined problems. A good mind is capable of making distinctions and clarifying, capable of the various modes of discourse that we talk about so often in writing: description, illustration, persuasion, explanation. A good mind is capable of making decisions, inquiring, and learning how to learn. We want people to be able to to practise these various aspects of thoughtfulness alone, and with others, verbally and orally, in written form with various subjects, with a core kind of knowledge, and in appropriate activities, given their age. Moreover, today you hear from many quarters, that the kind of graduates we want should have, in addition to these kinds of qualities, dispositions that are favourable to employing them, and they should display the virtues that go along with intellectual pursuit, for instance, the courage to pursue a matter to its end. Not only are these the kinds of things that people are talking about with respect to an elite class destined to go on to the university; they are saying we need these for a far broader range of our people than ever before.

It's a tall order, but that was the list of things that I culled from reading a lot and from talking to people around the country about what they wanted with respect to the next generation of graduates.

This kind of thoughtfulness requires certain conditions. And the conditions are conditions that are very difficult to achieve in schools. For instance, in order for people to be thoughtful, you need a certain amount of mystery. Paradox is helpful. Uncertainty often stimulates us to think. Ambiguity can be a good condition for stimulating thoughtfulness; unpredictability; an atmosphere in which there are multiple demands; a dynamic social environment; diversity in culture, language, and background; theoretical disagreements; tension; incongruity; incompleteness; an urgent need to know; wonder; marvel; astonishment; surprise; enchantment.

When you go through the list, you begin to realize a very interesting fact. That is, that all of these things are potential in any classroom, but all of them are recognized all too often as the enemy, not the friend, of instruction. Few are the teachers (who have a hundred and sixty students) who want to see ambiguity, who welcome unpredictability as a friend, who can deal with great diversity and

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Teaching ESL in the CEGEP 1989: Reports

The event continues to grow. This year's version of "Teaching ESL in the Cégep" brought one hundred eighty-six teachers, coordinators and monitors from every corner of Quebec to Dawson College on January 13 for a day of intensive workshops and displays. Co-sponsored by Dawson and Collège André-Laurendeau, and supported by DGEC, the annual meeting is the only time during the year when ESL teachers from almost every college in the system learn together.

The excerpts from workshop reports printed in this issue highlight two of the twelve sessions.

WHO'S USING WHAT IN ESL IN THE CEGEP

Leaders: Chuck Pearo, Collège André-Laurendeau, Claudia Rock, Collège de l'Assomption
Reporter: Bruce Jackson, Collège Granby

This workshop was a follow-up to the recently published survey, *Who's Using What in ESL in the Cegep*, conducted by Chuck Pearo and Claudia Rock to determine what materials and placement tests are being used in college-level courses in Quebec today. In its printed form, the survey outlined the various methods, readers, lab materials, in-house materials, and placement tests in use in the fifty-three colleges which responded. In this workshop, the authors went one step further, defining certain trends in modern ESL teaching and raising serious questions about our current ESL curriculum.

Methods

A remarkable, if not disturbing, fact exposed by the survey was the widespread reliance on methods as core material. This reliance is most evident in the "100" and "300" levels, but some colleges are using methods in the "900" level. Of these methods, college teachers preferred the AKL and Spectrum series. According to the workshop leaders, reaction outside of CEGEP circles to this reliance on commercial methods bordered on the amused and patronizing. Indeed, one has to wonder why methods deemed outdated and inappropriate by many still find their way into college curricula.

Looking for some answers, the workshop leaders lead a brainstorming session to discover what a college-level course should encompass and stress, taking into consideration our place in the academic ladder. Participants concluded that literacy skills should predominate. The reading and writing skills inherent to business tasks and undergraduate studies must be dealt with at the college level. Specific vocational learning, such as business English or secretarial English, should also be developed (or pioneered, considering the relative newness of ESP). In fact, all agreed that meeting the specific needs of our students must assume foremost importance, whether at the general, vocational, or adult level.

Placement Tests

Further questions remain to be answered, especially with respect to placement tests. Through the survey, the authors discovered discrepancies in placement cut-off point. A student, for instance, with a score of 67 on the TCAL test (used by 60% of CEGEPS), would be classified 104 at one college, 301 at another, 302 at another, and 901 at a last! No reasonable explanation seemed to justify these placements. The survey data did not corroborate the theory that colleges in regions with substantial anglophone populations inevitably classify more stringently. Participants blamed the lack of consistency on administrative tampering and poor communication among colleges.

The workshop concluded with a recommendation to improve communication between CEGEPS by getting together outside the regular coordination meetings and the January conferences. *Who's Using What in ESL in the CEGEP* provides the first step in that process.

[Copies of Who's Using What in ESL in the CEGEP are available from Chuck Pearo at Collège André-Laurendeau while quantities last. Call 514-364-6620, Ext. 218.]

COMPUTER-ASSISTED LANGUAGE LEARNING (CALL)

Leader: Roger Kenner, Concordia University
Reporter: Peter Esposito, Collège Montmorency

After a quick overview of the state of CALL today, Roger Kenner demonstrated commercially available software for the ESL classroom.

CALL is a broad field encompassing any use of the computer which assists in the language learning process. This includes, but is not limited to, CAI (Computer-Assisted Instruction) which deals mainly with discrete-point drills and exercises. CALL also includes holistic activities such as text reconstruction programs, adventure games and simulations, and the use of work processors. In CALL, the computer acts as a stimulus to groupinteraction. A pivotal event in the development of CALL was the 1983 TESOL conference in Toronto when researchers from different countries came together and took a critical look at the use of the computer as a language learning tool. Research was undertaken to ascertain what kind of activities are effective on the computer. As a result of this critical analysis, some old "buzzwords" have been put to rest and a new role for the computer has emerged. It is not enough to use a computer because it can give immediate feedback. This can also be achieved throught the use of flashcards or answer keys. What a computer should do is give rich, detailed, and pertinent feedback. In the past, programs which attempted to offer individualized instruction focused on machine-learner interaction. The new trend is toward having several students work together in front of the computer creating an opportunity for learner-learner communication.

Roger Kenner stressed that the computer must be integrated into the rest of the classroom activities. He also cautioned teachers not to judge software too harshly, or at least not any more harshly than they would judge textbooks. Finding a few mistakes in a software is not sufficient reason to disregard it. As teachers, we should assess what's good about a program and try to incorporate that into our teaching.

SOFTWARE PRESENTED

*Animal Learning Game (Apple:public domain)
*Syntaxe des Phrases/Work Order (IBM)
*Eliza (Apple/IBM)
*Quartext (Apple/IBM)
*Prompt (IBM):
*Mystery House (Apple: public domain)
*Adventure Game Generator (IBM)
*Decision Taker

About Word Processors:

Students should be introduced to a heavy-duty work processor such as Word Perfect rather than to a simplified version. Students need not learn all the functions of a work processor. Initially they should be given easy tasks such as writing a text, saving a document, and making template files. Once students have a grasp of the mechanics, they can be assigned more language-based tasks such as changing a text from the present to the past or rearranging a paragraph full of misplaced sentences.

[Copies of complete reports from the twelve workshops are available from Literacy Across the Curriculum, Dawson College, 514-931-8731.]

The Literacy of Thoughtfulness

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uncertainty. There is something about the very conditions of schooling that makes us prefer that these other kinds of conditions be minimized, not maximized.

So there is the dilemma....

[Brown went on to describe his year-long odyssey through American and Canadian schools in search of thoughtfulness. He found predictably few examples, but those few were worthy of close examination. Finally he suggested that when we seek to evaluate "thoughtfulness," we will have to develop qualitative, rather than quantitative measures. Tapes of the entire speech and of addresses by John Dixon, Janet White, and Bernard J. Shapiro are available on two cassettes($7.00 each) from the Centre for Literacy, Dawson College. *Notes 1989* containing summaries from the assessment conference will be ready by late fall.]

10 TO PONDER

1 On an ideal of the humanist endeavour

The humanist's business is finally with the interplay between thought, word, and action-- with the curious processes by which actions become ideas or ideas become actions and by which both actions and ideas find their expression in language. The humanist maintains that if we keep our sense of humour intact, we can know something about these processes. To control the words that lead to action, or to understand the ideas that proceed from deeds, is a form of strength, both for individuals and for societies. It makes possible the other achievements of civilization.

Robert Pattison, "The Stupidity Crisis," *ADE Bulletin*

2 On turning weakness to strength

The best teachers never make negative assumptions about the potential of their students.

Unfortunately, the atmosphere of too many of our schools almost forces us into this counterproductive posture. We build schools on the disease model ("Your students have the following defects and deficiencies, and it is your job this year to remediate these") rather than on the more subtle but immensely more powerful strength model ("Your students have the following strengths and abilities, and it is your job to begin there, and build on those, and take advantage of them, and in the process turn areas of weakness around").

Elliott Wigginton, *Sometimes a Shining Moment: The Foxfire Experience* (Anchor Books, Doubleday 1986) 223.

3 When nouns go bad

Let's face it: Nouns, by and large, are not sexy. If language wore clothing, nouns would be the non-starters in dark horn-rimmed glasses and cardigan sweaters who loiter on the threshold of ambition discussing abstracts and whether their modifiers have dangled lately. In the versatile English language, however, nothing is impossible, and nouns (which, as Miss Grundy told you, are persons, places or things) have been known to yearn for a walk on the wild side. But when they aspire to linguistic licentiousness, nouns don't just swap their specs and sweaters for sunglasses and leather jackets. No, when nouns go bad, they go where the action is: they become verbs.

Charles Marsh,"When Nouns Go Bad," *American Way* (January 15, 1988) 17.

WIN $1000.00
AND
SEE YOUR WORK IN PRINT

A Writing Contest for CEGEP students sponsored by Bell Canada and Dawson College *Literacy Across the Curriculum*

FIRST PRIZE	$1000.00
SECOND PRIZE	$ 300.00
THIRD PRIZE	$ 200.00

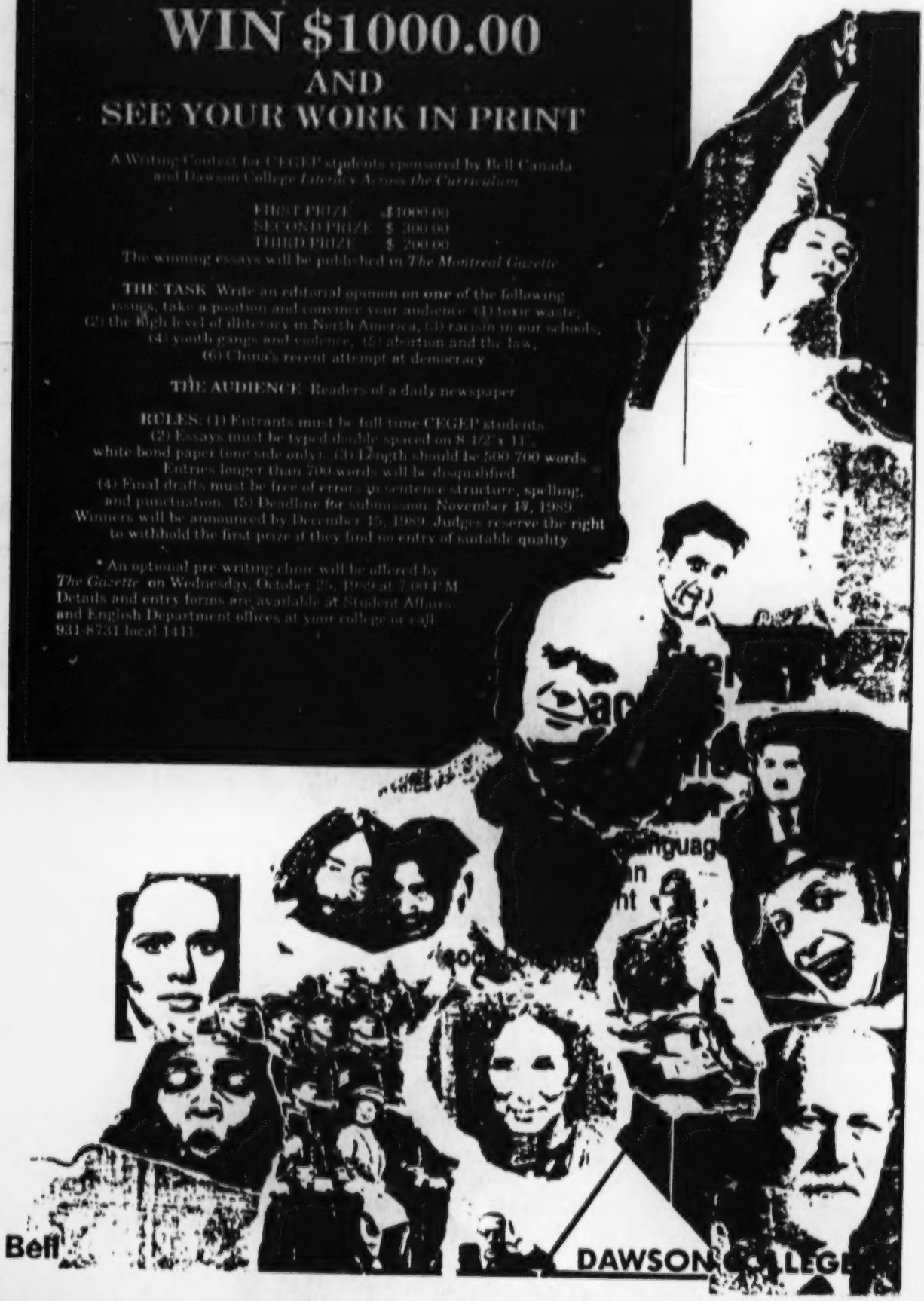
The winning essays will be published in *The Montreal Gazette*

THE TASK: Write an editorial opinion on **one** of the following issues; take a position and convince your audience: (1) toxic waste, (2) the high level of illiteracy in North America, (3) racism in our schools, (4) youth gangs and violence, (5) abortion and the law, (6) China's recent attempt at democracy.

THE AUDIENCE: Readers of a daily newspaper.

RULES: (1) Entrants must be full-time CEGEP students. (2) Essays must be typed double-spaced on 8 1/2" x 11" white bond paper (one side only). (3) Length should be 500-700 words. Entries longer than 700 words will be disqualified. (4) Final drafts must be free of errors in sentence structure, spelling, and punctuation. (5) Deadline for submission: November 17, 1989. Winners will be announced by December 15, 1989. Judges reserve the right to withhold the first prize if they find no entry of suitable quality.

* An optional pre-writing clinic will be offered by *The Gazette* on Wednesday, October 25, 1989 at 7:00 P.M. Details and entry forms are available at Student Affairs and English Department offices at your college or call 931-8731 local 1411.



Writing in Schools and Colleges: A Quebec Study

Aida-Alma Cunanan

I completed a study last year about student writing in the four largest Quebec anglophone CEGEPs and in eight of their feeder high schools. Two hundred seventy-four teachers of English, Sciences, and Social Sciences answered an Academic Writing Tasks questionnaire that asked about the kinds of writing tasks students are asked to do, the importance of writing, the evaluation of writing, student writing abilities and writing problems. The similarity of response patterns for the different teacher groups was analyzed by chi-square with the acceptable level of confidence set at $p < .01$.

The data obtained showed that students do a considerable amount of writng at both academic levels, especially in the predominantly language-based disciplines such as English and Social Sciences. Most of the writing assigned is transactional in nature, i.e. designed to pass on information in expository form; with the exception of high school English teachers, very few teachers assign expressive or poetic writing tasks. I did, however, find differences between the high schools and CEGEPS, and among disciplines. Between the academic levels, there were significant differences in the number of short writing tasks assigned, and in the teachers' assessments of the writing skills necessary to fulfil the tasks, of student writing abilities, and of student writing problems. The main difference among disciplines concerned amount and type of writing.

While this study answered some questions about the state of writing in Quebec's anglophone CEGEPs and high schools, it has raised as many questions as it has answered. One of these is the extent to which respondents' answers can be taken as indications of actual practice in the schools and colleges. To what degree are the responses a function of the generally acknowledged but not necessarily adopted notion that writing has an important role to play in student learning? Another question has to do with the problem of self-selection. To what extent are the respondents representative of the general population under study? Are the results generalizable to the rest of the faculty, not only in the institutions included in the study, but also in similar institutions within the system?

Despite these uncertainties, I do believe that the study results give a fairly good indication of what goes on in our schools and colleges in terms of writing. It provides a clearer and more concrete picture than we have ever had of the diversity and complexity of academic writing tasks assigned to students. It also highlights the writing skills that teachers deem important for academic success, the criteria teachers use to judge student writing and teachers' perceptions of student ability to do the tasks assigned.

Finally it indicates the degree, or lack, of coherence in the writing requirements between the high schools and CEGEPs and among the disciplines. The results underline the need for more communication and closer collaboration between levels and across disciplines to evaluate the perceptions, teaching, and use of writing for learning in the various disciplinary classrooms.

Aida-Alma Cunanan teaches English and Humanities at Dawson College in Montreal. This study was the basis of her doctoral thesis in Education. Ms. Cunanan will present a detailed analysis and animate a discussion of her findings at an Academic Alliance of English Teachers meeting on November 3.

French Mother-tongue Literacy in Canada

An academic conference scheduled in the middle of a sultry August might not be expected to attract large numbers of registrants, but the 42nd annual conference of L'Association canadienne d'éducation de langue française entitled "Alphabétiser en français" brought almost eight hundred participants from every part of Canada to Quebec City's clifftop Chateau Frontenac for the first major Canadian forum on French mother-tongue literacy. With knowledgeable speakers from the education, volunteer, corporate and union sectors presenting over four days, conference planners provided a a wide-ranging assessment of the state of francophone literacy in Canada.

From the opening address by M. Claude Ryan, Quebec Minister of Education until the closing synthesis by Professor Serge Wagner, there was a consistent broadening of the definition of "alphabétisation" which has traditionally had a narrow focus on the basic A,B,C,s. During the ACELF gathering, presenters referred to the recent study on French literacy conducted by l'Institut canadien d'éducation des adultes (see BRIEFS, p.), to the 1987 Southam survey, to the report by the Canadian Business Task Force on Literacy, and to numerous American and European studies that have extended the notion of functional literacy in industrialized countries.

Following each session, participants were invited to respond and to formulate recommendations for action. Serge Wagner, an education professor at Université du Québec à Montréal summarized these incisively at the end of conference. He spoke of the broadened concept and the complexity of literacy, particularly within a bilingual context. Literacy must be demystified, he said. Wagner emphasized the urgency of giving priority to the literacy needs of francophones outside Quebec. He reminded listeners that the right to literacy in French was not yet generally recognized outside Quebec and that other provincial governments had no legal obligation to offer adult education in French. Only Quebec, Ontario, and New Brunswick have policies in this area.

Wagner noted the need for the society to value reading and to rethink the teaching of reading and writing in the present school system (especially in immersion and so-called special education classes) to ensure that we not send out waves of youths who will have serious literacy problems in the future. Literacy teachers must have improved training and better working conditions. They now often work on the fringes of the system.

More partners have to work together in common purpose and non-governmental agencies must have adequate funding. Workplace literacy must be developed and social policies must reflect a commitment to basic skills education. Benefits must be available to "alpha"learners.

We must pay attention to those groups with special needs-women, immigrants- and stop treating learners as consumers. They must be involved in defining their own learning needs and designing their learning activities. We must stop victimizing and stigmatizing "alpha" learners, but also respect those who choose not to learn.

Finally, Wagner looked forward to a conference in Montreal during International Literacy Year when participants will formulate a ten-year plan and identify target groups for action until the year 2000.

Full proceedings of the ACELF conference will be available later this fall.

Writing Assessment Research and College Placement Practice

An intercollegial workshop on developing a placement system for college writing students that is humane, effective, and realistic in the context of the Quebec educational system.

Leaders: Peter Evans, O.I.S.E.; Allan Patenaude, M.E.Q.; and Tom McKendy, Marianopolis College
Time: Friday, November 3,1989
Place: Vanier College
821 Ste. Croix
Fee: $35.00 (includes lunch)
Registration: 744-7890

Literacy Across the Curriculum Workshops Winter 1990

January 9-10, 1990
Developing Guides Across the Disciplines to Help Students Read More Effectively
Leader: Harvey S. Wiener
City University of New York

January 11-12, 1990
Developing Brief Writing Assignments That Defy Plagiarism (e.g. Microthemes, Test Questions)
Leader: John C. Bean
Seattle University

March 9, 1990
Thinking, Reasoning, and Writing
Leader: Elaine P. Maimon
Queen's College, CUNY

Also Toby Fulwiler on informal writing and Barbara Walvoord on writing and thinking in science, dates t.b.a.

Place : Dawson College,
Atwater Campus
Multi-purpose Room, 5-B16

Some workshops are designed as single credit PERFORMA courses. Full details available in early October. Call for information, 931-8731, local 1409.

BRIEFS

The Language of Science, Science report for teachers:11, prepared by Janet White for The Assessment of Performance Unit, Department of Education and Science, London, England.

As the introduction explains, one of the purposes of the studies that underlie this report was "to understand where and how scientific capability interacts with language performance: is there any evidence to suggest that competence in one domain might be only indirectly related to competence in the other? So far, our findings suggest that the links are direct. Pupils who were most highly rated in both science and language were found not only to have a good understanding of the Science involved, but also their language was well-structured to communicate that understanding to listeners or readers." This booklet looks at a selection of the student work that was assessed in both language and science surveys.

The analyses are incisive and the implications for science teaching provocative.

Copies of the booklet are available from The Centre for Literacy, Dawson College, 3040 Sherbrooke Street W., Montreal, Quebec, H3Z 1A4. Please enclose a cheque or money order for $3.00 made out to The QAAL/Dawson College Centre for Literacy.

EN TOUTES LETTRES ET EN FRANÇAIS, L'analphabétisme et l'alphabétisation des francophones au Canada, Andrée Boucher.

This study of literacy among francophones in Canada provides the most comprehensive look ever cast at the educational status and literacy levels of Canadians whose mother tongue is French. Synthesizing the results of a national survey, of interviews conducted across the country, of 1981 data from Statistics Canada, and of broad reading in the international literature, researcher Andrée Boucher has ascertained that in terms of undereducation and literacy problems, francophones have more critical deficiencies than anglophones. For example, the 1981 census reveals that 6.4% of francophones have less than five years of schooling compared to 2.0% of anglophones, and 23.7% have five to eight years compared to 12.7%. (More disturbing, in the same table we read that 28.8% of the native population of Canada has less than five years of schooling and 33.4% five to eight years.)

Mme Boucher analyzes the problem and makes a series of specific recommendations calling for cooperative efforts among all organizations committed to literacy with support from both provincial and federal governments and from the private sector.

This study was carried out under the auspices of L'Institut canadien d'éducation des adultes (ICEA) in collaboration with the Fédération des francophones hors Québec. It is available from the Institut canadien d'éducation des adultes, 506 est, Sainte-Catherine, suite 800, Montréal, Québec H2L 2C7.

Expérimentations du traitement de texte en alphabétisation
edited by Jean-Paul Hautecoeur.

The latest addition to the ALPHA series of essay collections edited by Jean-Paul Hautecoeur of the Quebec Ministère de l'Education, this volume presents an overview and several case studies documenting the use of micro-computers in the teaching of adult basic literacy. Hautecoeur points out that there has been resistance to computer-based literacy teaching both because of the equipment costs and teachers' predisposition to believe that writers must use a pen and paper before graduating to a machine. The experiments described in this book force teachers and funding bodies to reexamine some of their cherished notions about teaching basic literacy. The new technology holds much promise for enhancing the learning and the self-esteem of adult literacy students.

Expérimentation sdu traitement de texte en alphabétisation is available at no cost from Ministère de l'Education, Direction des formations extrascolaires, 66, rue Fullum, 4e étage, Montréal, QC H2K 4L1, Tel.: (514) 873-3241.

Canadian Copyright Law and Classroom Teaching

The Association of Teachers of English in Quebec has invited John Wollinsky, University of Alberta, chair of the CCTE Task Force on Copyright, to speak and lead a discussion.
Date: October 23, 1989
Time: 7:30 p.m.
Place: PSBGM, 600 Fielding Avenue

Teachers in all disciplines are welcome.

Announcements
National/International

Ontario Council of Teachers of English Annual Fall Conference
"Living Literature in the Nineties"
The King Edward Hotel
Toronto, Ontario
October 12-14,1989

The Ontario Reading Association 1989 Celebrate Literacy Conference
Royal York Hotel
Toronto, Ontario
October 13-14,1989
Keynote: Frank Smith

Interface "89
Thirteenth Annual Humanities and Technology Conference
Marietta, Georgia (Metro Atlanta)
October 19-20,1989

Sixth Annual Conference on Peer Tutoring in Writing
Youngstown State University
Youngstown, Ohio
November 3-5,1989

National Council of Teachers of English Annual Conference
"Celebrating Diversity"
Baltimore, Maryland
November 17-22,1989

MLA 1989
Sheraton Washington & Washington Hilton
Washington, D.C.
December 27-30,1989

CCCC Winter Workshop
Sheraton Sand Key Resort
Clearwater Beach, Florida
January 5-7,1990
Topics:
Literacy and Cross-Cultural Traditions
Meeting the Literacy Challenge
Evaluating Writing in Contemporary Contexts

National Association for Developmental Education (NADE) 14th Annual Conference including The International Forum on Access to Higher Education
Westin Hotel at Copley Place
Boston, MA
February 28 - March 3,1990

Conference on College Composition and Communication
Chicago, IL
March 21-24,1990

Springboards 1990
Theme: Faces of Literacy
Montreal Convention Centre
April 19-20. 1990
This year Springboards will host the Laurentian Regional Conference of the International Reading Association

National Project on Computers and College Writing Conference
May 1990, date t.b.a.
City University of New York
New York, NY

Details of these conferences available in LAC office, Tel.(514) 931-8731, ext. 1411.

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October 1989 Vol. 5 No. 5

Literacy across the curriculum

Language for Learning

Closing gaps

Well-chosen metaphors cast their subject in a clarifying light, but the wrong metaphor distorts the nature of the original term. Likening illiteracy to an epidemic is a distortion. Illiteracy is not a disease and cannot be eradicated. Literacy and illiteracy are not absolute conditions, and being literate does not represent a state of well-being. The idea of fighting a world-wide campaign against an insidious force that saps human potential and undermines economies might arouse public fervour and help mobilize national campaigns, but it distorts the nature and complexity of literacy. I would like to offer an alternate image before the image of disease is burnt indelibly into the public mind during International Year of Literacy (1990).

Literacy is not exclusively an educational issue. It cannot be separated from the political and socio-cultural contexts in which it occurs. Literacy involves a person's ability to read, write, compute, and use information critically to achieve personal goals and to function within a particular culture and society. It is a relative term, and over the past forty years, the demands have been rising, not only in the industrialized world but in the Third World. Where a grade five level of literacy in some Third World countries might have been considered adequate for much of the population only a few years ago, today it would be considered inadequate if the country were moving towards industrialization.

We should not pretend that teaching people to read and write is automatically going to solve the problems of poverty, sickness, and starvation. Literacy, like all other learning, must start with the needs and purposes of the learners. In October 1987, at an international seminar on literacy in the industrialized countries, Lalita Ramdas shared with delegates a poem that had been dictated by learners in an adult literacy class in West Bengal. A few excerpts illuminate their condition better than any theoretician could:

What kind of people are we?
We are poor, very poor--
But we are not stupid.
That is why , despite our illiteracy,
we still exist.
But we have to know
why we should become literate?

The Babus take up this work
in their own interest.
Maybe the election is around the corner,
or perhaps there is a government grant
or something that must be utilized.
Let those who teach us
remember this
We have enough troubles and sufferings.
Why should we add to them by joining literacy classes?

....And yet, something more.
We don't have a square meal.
We have few clothes.
We don't have a proper shelter.
And, to top it all, floods come and wash away everything.
Then comes a long spell of drought drying everything up.
Would it help if we became literate?[1]

In Canada, we do not have large numbers of totally illiterate citizens. We do have large numbers of undereducated citizens, and not because the schools have failed. Until the mid-fifties, more than half of all

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The QAAL/Dawson College Centre for Literacy in the Schools and the Community

Canadians left before completing high school, enough at that time for them to aspire to a reasonably secure job with middle-class status. Today, fewer than 10% of all new jobs require less than high-school leaving, and that percentage is falling.

Unlike diamonds, literacy is not forever. A person may attain a certain literacy level during schooling but lose it if the skill is not maintained. Many people do little reading or writing for pleasure, and most jobs did not demand very much of either until quite recently. Ironically, the very technologies that seemed the greatest threat to literacy, have been forcing individuals to replace manual skills and muscle with skills of the mind. The nature of the workplace is changing rapidly, but rising literacy demands are only part of the new reality. In North America, literacy alone will not solve problems of poverty, economic disparity, or low productivity.

Canada is already more than half awakened to the issue, and struggling toward some concerted response. The Southam Report (September 1987) and the report of The Canadian Business Task Force on Literacy (February 1988) have raised public awareness. The National Literacy Secretariat of The Secretary of State is funding some initiatives across the country, while provincial governments are increasing support. But the amounts come nowhere near meeting the need, and it is clear that not all the interested parties are talking about the same phenomenon when they talk about literacy. Governments and business want quick-fixes. Researchers and teachers know they do not exist.

In January 1987, before Canadian attention became focused on literacy, I wrote about some general principles that should guide policies on literacy in the schools. I have not changed my mind, but working now within a broader framework, I would like to extend the discussion to include workplace and community literacy.

Within school systems, teachers are the grassroots animators who can awaken students' potential to think, to use language to shape their world. Administrators must recognize the centrality of teachers, provide the support to train and retrain teachers to integrate content and language; they must offer the flexibility that allows teachers the freedom to teach.

In the community, as in schools, literacy learning must respect the purposes of the learner. People come to classes for personal reasons. The best teaching starts with those reasons. Unlike schools, learners do not have to attend. Politicians and bureaucrats must understand that literacy cannot be legislated; they must provide the resources for sustained, integrated efforts at local community levels and remove artificial barriers that lock people into programs and tracks.

In the workplace, the key word remains integration. No one wants to be labelled "illiterate," or "undereducated;" on the other hand, almost anyone at any level welcomes the opportunity to "upgrade." People are more than workers. No effective learning fragments a person into functions.

We cannot accept either the trivialization or the sensationalizing of the literacy issue in Canada. We are going to have to keep redefining the threshold of "minimum competence" relative to social, cultural, and economic goals, and work toward closing the gaps, undertanding that new gaps will always appear. If universal literacy of a higher order is essential to a modern democratic society, we must declare it a national and regional priority and make a long-term commitment to support it far beyond an International Year.

[1] The full text appears in Literacy in Industrialized Countries, A Focus on Practice, edited by Margaret Gayfer, International Council for Adult Education, Toronto 1988, pages 18-19.

L.S.

One function of the Centre for Literacy is to critically examine current thinking about literacy, to provide a forum for discussion and exchange, and to participate in the formation of public opinion and policy. We welcome your comments.

Literacy Across the Curriculum

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The Centre for Literacy in the Schools and the Community

1 On the future of work

What's the best preparation for one of these careers?

Advice here is simple: You won't be embarking on a career, at least as we currently define the term, because few of the activities I've mentioned will proceed along well-defined paths to progressively higher levels of responsibility. As the economy evolves toward services tailored to the particular needs of clients and customers, hands-on experience will count for more than formal rank. As technologies and markets rapidly evolve, moreover, the best preparation will be through cumulative learning on the job rather than formal training completed years before.

This means that academic degrees and professional credentials will count for less; on-the-job training, for more. American students have it backwards. The courses to which you now gravitate -finance, law, accounting, management, and other practical arts-may be helpful to understand how a particular job is now done (or, more accurately, how your instructors did it years ago when they held them), but irrelevant to how such a job will be done. The intellectual equipment needed for the job of the future is an ability to define problems, quickly assimilate relevant data, conceptualize and reorganize the information, make deductive and inductive leaps with it, ask hard questions about it, discuss findings with colleagues, work collaboratively to find solutions, and then convince others. And these sorts of skills can't be learned in career-training courses. To the extent they can be found in universities at all, they're more likely to be found in subjects such as history, literature, philosophy, and anthropology-in which students can witness how others have grappled for centuries with the challenge of living good and productive lives. Tolstoy and Thucydides are far more relevant to the management jobs of the future, for example, than are Hersey and Blanchard (*Management of Organizational Behaviour*, Prentice-Hall, 5th Edition, 1988).

Robert B. Reich, "Memorandum to undergraduates, John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University," *Harper's Magazine* (April,1989) 30-31.

2 On the success of schools

Every human child is an archeologist and anthropologist, an unprejudiced explorer from another galaxy. Children learn from the artifacts they find in their environment and from the behaviour of the people around them. Their greatest insight about written language before they come to school is probably that written language is different from the pattern on the wallpaper--that signs and labels have a purpose, that they do something more than just decorate the landscape. Where do children learn that reading and writing are boring and difficult, that learning is tedious, that they are themselves dullards, that collaboration is cheating, and that nothing at school is worth doing without a score? Instead of thinking that the failings of students reflect what they have not learned, we should regard these failings as what they have been taught.

It is often difficult to persuade teachers of all this. Many teachers have come to believe that it is natural for children to be apathetic to learning. To persuade teachers otherwise, it is sometimes necessary to go to the beginning, to remind them how children learn to talk and to understand spoken language.

Frank Smith, *Insult to Intelligence, the Bureaucratic Invasion of our Classrooms* (Heinemann,1988)

3 On myths about literacy

Myth #1: There is an Epidemic of Illiteracy in (North) American Society
Myth #2: Schools Are to Blame for Problems in the Workplace
Myth #5: Illiteracy Can Be "Cured" in One Generation
Myth #6: Schools Know How to Work with Parents
Myth #7: Literacy Programs are Fail-safe
Myth #8: Reading is More Important than Math
Myth #9: Literacy is the Ticket Out of Welfare
Myth #10: Business Can Define Workplace Literacy

"Myth Talk," *The Ladder* (September 1989). Reports on these "myths" have appeared in *The Literacy Beat*, a newsletter published by the Media Resource Project on Literacy. Back issues, collected under one cover called *Backbeats*, can be ordered for $12 from the Education Writers Association, 1001 Connecticut Avenue, N.W., Suite 310, Washington, D.C. 20036.

Journals Improve Writing in a French Class

Vivianne M. Silver
Dawson College

As a faithful and disciplined journal writer, I had attended an Ira Progoff retreat to gain some insight into the process of writing for personal benefit and growth. Among many questions I had, one was about pedagogy. How could one create a bridge between the personal learning that occurs through journal writing and the formal learning goals of a classroom? It was only later at a Toby Fulwiler workshop on journal writing that I found an avenue to pursue this question in my own classroom.

Context

For the Winter semester of 1989, I had designed a 900 (advanced) level French course entitled "Essai: la femme d'aujourd'hui pour un monde de demain." The course was being offered for the first time as part of the Women's Studies Certificate at Dawson College. Of the twenty-five registrants, twenty females and five males, the majority were either francophone or bilingual students, and mostly second year students.

By the time I had attended the Fulwiler workshop in early February, we had met four times as a class, leaving eleven weeks to go until the end of term. Although I had set up a program for the course, there was still room for an emerging curriculum as well. Since we were working on the exploration of themes relevant to Women's Studies, new ideas could easily be incorporated into the structure.

When I returned from the workshop, I suggested to the class that at the beginning of each period, we spend ten minutes reflecting and writing (an application of Toby's "five-minute write"). The class agreed.

The assignment

For the first two weeks, since we were still at the investigation stage, I began each class by circulating relevant visual stimuli to which they were to respond by writing quietly for ten minutes (see accompanying photos). To give credibility to the exercise, I would write as well.

After writing, we would gather in five groups of five to share our thoughts, feelings, impressions, etc.. These discussions, on a very mature and advanced level, often led to examination of social or philosophical issues such as human rights, or, Is God male or female? or, How does the socialization of males affect their bonding with their children? They often led to personal issues as well.

We would then resume as a class and relate the discussions to our readings. Finally, I collected these reflections and commented on them.

After three weeks, we moved to another stage. The students brought to class something they had reacted to, wanted to share with us and felt would be of benefit to all. We would all write for ten minutes, again followed by discussion and my comments on their written impressions.

At the end of six weeks, I collected their overall impressions on their progress. By then, they were well on the way to expressing their thoughts and feelings on the subject of Women's Studies, as well as relating many of the topics to their readings and to the discussion in class.

The way having been gradually paved, the students were then easily able to begin the class simply by reflecting and writing - a true Toby Fulwiler "five-minute write". For four weeks they wrote personal reactions to readings, their thoughts, their discoveries, comments on the dynamics of the group, interpersonal relations which had formed, questions

they had. Again, I picked up written work and returned it to them with non-judgmental comments and my own feedback.

Results

The students were given a final assignment, a "Projet personnel" which was to be an edited and revised collection of their reflections, an evolution of thought processes over fourteen weeks of work.

Because the whole exercise was set up in a non-threatening manner, students felt comfortable to write, to express their thoughts and feelings, to share, to discuss, to question, to receive feedback and encouragement.

Journal writing for my students was effective on many levels:

1. It allowed me to tangibly witness the evolution and maturation of their thought processes, their personal reflections, comments, on the many issues, cultural, intellectual, emotional, they were confronting, often for the first time. This was particularly evident in my male students.

2. It was a wonderful way for questions to lead to other questions. Their writing often led them to an exploration of new areas of interest which had piqued their curiosity.

3. The act of sharing (myself included) created a very special atmosphere in the class, a place where people spoke freely about sensitive issues such as adoption, working mothers, sexist fathers, pregnancies, abortion, marriage, sexuality etc..

4. Journal writing and sharing enriched the fabric of the class by strengthening interpersonal relations and group dynamics.

5. Students' writing improved as there was a commitment to interest their colleagues in the substance of what they wrote.

6. My students' writing created a new avenue of dialogue between us. I would write comments to which they often would respond in turn.

7. The students' journals became places where they could freely give me feedback on my teaching effectiveness.

Although there is still an infinite number of possibilities to explore and experiment with, I am firmly conviced that journal writing in my French class was definitely a new vehicle which helped my students formalize their thinking and improve their writing.

I was able to identify in my students' writing the processes which Toby describes in his article on "Journal Writing" such as: Writing about reading, Answering, Asking, Seeing, Commenting and Extending, Rethinking Conversations. Toby also writes about a journal as a "Record of Intellectual Growth": He says, "Journals have a signal value in preserving early thought and, at the same time, encouraging that thought to develop and change as the writer develops and changes." This was evident to me as I read their weekly journals.

Conclusion

Aside from providing a good learning tool and a means of improving their written expression, my students discovered that journal writing could give them a chart of their lives; it could expand and deepen their vision of themselves. As well, it could help them to integrate the various levels of their personalities, of their learning. Many of them saw that their journal could be a lifelong personal tool to help them create meaning within, rather than always search for it outside of themselves.

For further reading see Toby Fulwiler, *The Journal Book*, (Boynton/Cook, 1987)

A Developing/Selecting Appropriate Tests

Test developers should provide the information that test users need to select appropriate tests.

Test users should select tests that meet the purpose for which they are to be used and that are appropriate for the intended test-taking populations.

Test Developers Should:

1. Define what each test measures and what the test should be used for. Describe the population(s) for which the test is appropriate.
2. Accurately represent the characteristics, usefulness, and limitations of tests for their intended purposes.
3. Explain relevant measurement concepts as necessary for clarity at the level of detail that is appropriate for the intended audience(s).
4. Describe the process of test development. Explain how the content and skills to be tested were selected.
5. Provide evidence that the test meets its intended purpose(s).
6. Provide either representative samples or complete copies of test questions, directions, answer sheets, manuals, and score reports to qualified users.
7. Indicate the nature of the evidence obtained concerning the appropriateness of each test for groups of different racial, ethnic, or linguistic backgrounds who are likely to be tested.
8. Identify and publish any specialized skills needed to administer each test and to interpret scores correctly.

Test Users Should:

1. First define the purpose for testing and the population to be tested. Then, select a test for that purpose and that population based on a thorough review of the available information.
2. Investigate potentially useful sources of information, in addition to test scores, to corroborate the information provided by tests.
3. Read the materials provided by test developers and avoid using tests for which unclear or incomplete information is provided.
4. Become familiar with how and when the test was developed and tried out.
5. Read independent evaluations of a test and of possible alternative measures. Look for evidence required to support the claims of test developers.
6. Examine specimen sets, disclosed tests or samples of questions, directions, answer sheets, manuals, and score reports before selecting a test.
7. Ascertain whether the test content and norms group(s) or comparison group(s) are appropriate for the intended test takers.
8. Select and use only those tests for which the skills needed to administer the test and interpret scores correctly are available.

*The Code states the major obligations to test takers of professionals who develop or use educational tests. It is not intended to cover tests made by individual teachers for use in their own classrooms. The Code was developed by the Joint Committee on Testing Practices, a cooperative effort of several professional organizations, that has as its aim the advancement, in the public interest, of the quality of testing practices.

A complete copy of the document can be ordered from the Joint Committee on Testing Practices, American Psychological Association, 1200 17th Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20036. Copies are also available in the Centre for Literacy.

Reprinted with permission from *The Code of Fair Testing Practices in Education (1988). Washington D.C.: Joint Committee on Testing Practices.

Writing Assessment: A View from a Ministry of Education

Excerpts from an address by Dr. Bernard J. Shapiro, Deputy Minister, Ontario Ministry of Education, to The Seventh Annual Conference on Writing Assessment of The National Testing Network in Writing, Montreal, April 11th 1989.

...To write good expository prose, whether it is persuasive or not, requires such skills as clear thinking, sound judgment, a grasp of appropriateness of examples, an ability to organize, and a sense of logical sequence. All of this in addition to a vocabulary adequate to the subject and an understanding of grammar and syntax sufficient to render standard English or whatever other language is important for that particular student.

But of course, in the end, it must be some other person who judges either the literary merit of a narrative or the communicative effectiveness of the exposition the writer has written.

So in the end, we are back to assessment. The assessment at appropriate stages of the development of these skills is a challenge that can and must be met, and to some extent has already been met. Over the past few years, much has come to light about the strengths and weaknesses of different methods of assessment. We know that it is not easy to assess writing fairly without being ethno-centric or sexist.

We know that students should not be disadvantaged by being offered assignments with which they cannot reasonably be expected to be familiar. We know that we need different criteria for different kinds of writing. And we know that large-scale assessments have a key role to play in helping us to establish, among other things, a range of appropriate expectations.

It also seems clear that because each piece of writing is to some extent unique, standardized tests that reduce writing to a set of measurable skills are, however necessary and however appropriate to an occasion, nevertheless almost always insufficient. Some aspects of writing can, of course, be tested objectively and ought to be. And we can record the results of some subjective evaluations on scales and with other kinds of special methods. Holistic testing, on the other hand, poses all the problems inherent in subjective assessment and seems to necessitate carefully briefed multiple markers and other safeguards for fair dealing.

As refinements continue to be made at both ends of the testing spectrum, from analytic to holistic, a more precise consensus on criteria must emerge. There is not much point in telling students they must jump a series of writing hurdles if we cannot tell them how far apart they are, how high they are, and what will happen if they can't leap over them. And there's not much point in training teachers to adapt to new coaching practices if we can't hold up a viable analysis of improved track records...

Notes NTNW 1989, the proceedings of the Montreal conference, will be available from the Centre by year's end.

ACCC/Fanshawe College Literacy Database

With a start-up grant from the Literacy Secretariat, Secretary of State, The Association of Canadian Community Colleges(ACCC) through Fanshawe College has compiled a database on literacy projects/programs in Canadian colleges and institutes. Although it set out to survey only projects developed by colleges in partnership with community organizations, there were responses from almost 400 programs and contact people. The information is now accessible on-line through the database but has also been listed in a directory to be available as of September 1989.

The ACCC has applied for a follow-up grant to expand the database to include listings of community projects outside the college system. For anyone interested in knowing how to access the current database, Project Officer Tamara Ilersich will be offering workshops at five locations across Canada during the coming six months.

For information on time and place, contact: Tamara Ilersich, Literacy Project Officer, Fanshawe College, P.O. Box 4005, London, Ontario, N5W 5H1, Tel.: (519) 452-4484, Fax: (519) 452-3570.

Literacy-Why Should Corporations Care?

The Institute of Donations and Public Affairs Research(IDPAR) is a body supported by a number of large Canadian corporations to provide research on social issues that might qualify for corporate funding. Each year IDPAR sponsors a symposium on a topic of concern, often on an issue identified for International Year attention by UNESCO. Because 1990 has been declared International Year of Literacy, IDPAR invited participants from business, social agencies, educational institutions, and government to meet on September 13-14, 1989, to hear national and international presenters discuss "Literacy-Why This is a Corporate and Societal Concern." Below are excerpts from some of the presenters who offered a broad range of perspectives.

From "Remarks,"
The Honourable Joyce Fairbairn, Member of the Senate of Canada, Symposium Chair.

It is estimated that in the year 2000 some 85 percent of the Canadian workforce will be made up of adults who are in the workforce now. Our labour market is changing dramatically, demanding new, varied and more flexible abilities all based on those fundamental skills which are lacking or limited in a significant portion of the workforce. We are told by government and its advisors that the best answer lies in directing energy and funds to training and retraining upwardly mobile workers. I suggest we must go farther. We must redefine the bottom line.

We must include those who cannot be trained and retrained to computers and new systems because they lack sufficient basic skills in reading, writing and numeracy. They are not incapable, they are not stupid. They may be the finest, most productive and dependable long term workers in a company--but they cannot move. Somewhere they have fallen through the cracks of our education system and they need another chance to learn the basics in order to advance. All over the western industrialized world nations are coming to grips with this need. Canada is slow to accept it or even to understand it. I will give you three examples.

First, in the last ten years we have seen Federal funding for basic education skills being re-directed into higher level training, a trend which was actually supported in 1985 by the MacDonald Royal Commission on the Economy whose final report did not address it at all. Secondly, we have just entered into a comprehensive trading arrangement with the United States in which benefits to Canada are directly related to the vigor and skill with which we can compete in an open market with an aggressive and highly motivated partner ten times our size. A significant part of our competitive strength will lie in the ability of our workforce to adapt to the adjustments already taking place.

And yet, Jean de Grandpré's Special Advisory Committee on Adjustment Assistance did not recommend last spring that the Federal government place a special focus on basic education and skills, although the Committee did note with concern the extent of illiteracy in the workforce.

And finally, for me one of the most incomprehensible regulations in our unemployment insurance system best illustrates our lack of focus on this problem. Some people lose their jobs because they lack basic skills to upgrade or be re-trained. They enrol in a basic education program so they can improve their opportunities. Good idea? Not at all. By regulation they are disqualified from unemployment insurance because they are not actively out looking for a job. They are caught coming and going. The very existeence of such a regulation--which could be easily changed or re-interpreted--indicates the enormous shift of attitude that must take place within our system if we are seriously to challenge illiteracy in Canada. It comes down to will and it comes down to awareness. Without both, there will be no national strategy.

Senator Joyce Fairbairn

From "Literacy and Corporations: Basic Skills Impediments to Communication and Productivity," Larry Mikulecky, Director Learning Skills Center Indiana University

Concrete Examples of the Problem

The Canadian Business Task Force estimates that Canadian business loses four billion dollars annually as a result of workers lacking the literacy communications skills needed to be productive. Projected American business costs would be as high as forty billion dollars.

The validity of such figures is currently impossible to gauge without extensive focussed research. Some indications of costs in human terms can be derived from a variety of sources. Below are examples of expensive and dangerous literacy communication problems reported by employers and employees to this author in the United States and to Dr. Maurice Taylor in Canada.

Hospital Kitchen Staff

At a major hospital, the kitchen staff could deal with regular menu orders using easily memorized check off forms. Health endangering mistakes sometimes occurred when special menu orders were made by physicians for patients whose conditions require special diets.

Hotel Chamber Maid

At a major urban hotel, repeated health problems and necessary time off were traced to a chamber maid's allergic reactions to misapplied disinfectant. The woman was not able to read warnings and application instructions on the bottle label. She had forgotten full details of her original oral instructions.

Quality Circle Recording

At a plant which is part of a Fortune 500 manufacturing corporation, quality circle discussion groups have been initiated among hourly employees as a way to solve quality control problems. Success of the program is dependent on the ability of workers to generate ideas and suggestions for improved quality control. In many circles, no worker was able to take and write up notes which are comprehensible to anyone not attending the discussion meeting.

These examples were reported to researchers in confidence by workers and supervisors with the understanding that anonymity would be maintained. Both employers and employees were concerned about repercussions if workplace literacy and communications problems were openly acknowledged.

From "Unions and Literacy: Workplace Programs," Jim Turk, Director of Education Ontario Federation of Labour.

I must voice a little concern about the unrealistic claims and promises being made to sell literacy. While a significant number of Canadians lack necessary literacy skills, it is wrong to overstate the consequences of the problem.

Limited literacy is not a major cause of unemployment -- lack of jobs is.

Limited literacy is not a major cause of accidents and diseases at work -- unsafe working conditions and widespread use of toxic substances is.

Limited literacy is not a principal cause of low productivity -- inadequate capital investment, outdated technology, poor work organization, are.

Limited literacy does not account for Canadian industry's difficulties in internationnal competition -- foreign ownership, small research and development budgets, high interest rates and high-priced dollars do.

Better literacy skills would help deal with all these problems, but in a more modest way than many literacy campaigners now promise. We feel it is important to be more realistic about the gains from increased literacy because overstated expectations will lead, over time, to a withering of broad commitment to resolving literacy problems. Significant literacy gains are a long-term objective.

Proceedings from the IDPAR Symposium are available in the Centre.

10 RESOURCES

The following books and materials are available and may be borrowed from The Centre for Literacy. We have listed resources regularly over the past three years and will continue as we expand the collection. The lists are not complete. They simply provide an indication of the range of materials.

***Books**

Anson, Chris M., editor, *Writing and Response: Theory, Practice and Research*, NCTE, 1989.

Bissex, Glenda L. and Richard H. Bullock, editors, *Seeing for Ourselves: Case-Study Research by Teachers of Writing*, Heinemann, 1987.

Fulwiler, Toby, *The Journal Book*, Boynton/Cook, 1987.

Golub, Jeff, Chair and the Committee on Classroom Practices, editors, *Focus on Collaborative Learning*, NCTE, 1988.

Goswami, Dixie and Peter R. Stillman, editors, *Reclaiming the Classroom: Teacher Research as an Agency for Change*, Boynton/Cook Publishers, 1987.

Hansen, Jane, editor, *When Writers Read*, Heinemann, 1987.

Harste, Jerome C., editor, *New Policy Guidelines for Reading: Connecting Research and Practice*, NCTE, 1989.

Harste, Jerome C., Kathy G. Short, and Carolyn Burke, editors, *Creating Classrooms for Authors: the Reading-Writing Connection*, 1988.

Harste, Jerome C., Virginia A. Woodward, and Carolyn L. Burke, editors, *Language Stories & Literacy Lessons*, Heinemann, 1984.

Lloyd-Jones, Richard and Andrea A. Lunsford, editors, *The English Coalition Conference: Democracy through Language*, NCTE/MLA, 1989.

Lunzer, Eric and Keith Gardner, editors, *The Effective Use of Reading*, Heinemann, 1979.

Nathan, Ruth, Frances Temple, Kathleen Juntunen, and Charles Temple, editors, *Classroom Strategies that Work: An Elementary Teacher's Guide to Process Writing*, Heinemann, 1989.

Newman, Judith M., ed.,*Whole Language: Theory in Use*, Heinemann, 1985.

Parker, Robert P. and Vera Goodkin, editors, *The Consequences of Writing: Enhancing Learning in the Disciplines*, Boynton/Cook, 1987.

Perl, Sondra and Nancy Wilson, editors, *Through Teachers' Eyes: Portraits of Writing Teachers at Work*, Heinemann Educational Books, 1986.

Smith, Frank, *Insult to Intelligence: the Bureaucratic Invasion of our Classrooms*, Heinemann, 1988.

Taylor, Denny and Catherine Dorsey-Gaines, editors, *Growing Up Literate: Learning from Inner-City Families*, Heinemann, 1988.

Wells, Gordon, ed., *The Meaning Makers: Children Learning Language and Using Language to Learn*, Heinemann, 1986.

Zemelman, Steven and Harvey Daniels, editors, *A Community of Writers: Teaching Writing in the Junior and Senior High School*, Heinemann, 1988.

***Selected Reports**

The Southam Report 1987

The Canadian Business Task Force on Literacy 1988

Thomas, Audrey, *Exemplary Adult Literacy Programs and Innovative Practices in Canada*, B.C. Ministry of Advanced Education and Job Training and Ministry Responsible for Science and Technology, 1989

_____, *Adult Literacy Volunteer Tutor Program Evaluation Kit, Adult Basic Education*, B.C. Ministry of Advanced Education and Job Training and Ministry Responsible for Science and Technology, 1989

*A full range of adult basic skills materials from Literacy Volunteers of America and from ALBSU, London, England.

*Information on workplace literacy

*We are in the process of collecting locally-developed adult literacy materials which will be kept in files for easy consultation. These files will be accessible beginning in early 1990.

Manuscripts Invited

Issues in Writing is a new journal devoted to the comprehensive study of writing in Business and Industry, Education, Science and Technology, Government and the Humanities, both from teachers in all disciplines and from non-academic professionals concerning all aspects of the writing process. Preferred articles:

* encourage dialogue across traditional boundaries of profession, form, and writer's role.
* challenge conventional definitions and approaches.
* provide opportunity for seldom-heard members of the writing community.
* generate discussion among traditionally separated writing interests.

Articles may be theoretical, historical, or descriptive studies; they can focus on practical approaches to writing. (maximum length: 30 double-spaced pages).

Send two copies of manuscript and 100-word abstract to: The Editors
Issues in Writing
Department of English
University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point
Stevens Point, WI 54481

Invitations for Program Proposals

Canadian Council of Teachers of English
National Conference
May 8-12,1990
Halifax, N.S.
Deadline: February 28,1990
Forms available from:
Margaret J. Young
Halifax West High School
3620 Dutch Village Road
Halifax, N.S., B3N 2S3

NATE Annual Conference
"Encompassing the Curriculum"
University of Manchester
April 9-11,1990
Information and forms available from:
Matthew Brown
72, Darbishire Road
Fleetwood
Lancashire
ENGLAND FY7 6QA

Call for Proposals: MLA Conference on Literacy 1990

The second MLA conference on literacy will convene 13-16 September 1990 in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Entitled "Responsibilities for Literacy: Communities, Schools, and Workplaces," the Pittsburgh conference addresses the urgent need for collaboration among agencies and constituencies involved in the literacy issue. Co-sponsoring the conference with the MLA are the Federation of State Humanities Councils and the University of Pittsburgh.

The conference will bring together representatives of these sometimes conflicting constituencies to consider their shared responsibilities and to consider literacy efforts in a variety of settings--homes, churches, synagogues, libraries, youth clubs, union halls, factories, schools, colleges, and universities.

Proposal forms are available from Responsibilities for Literacy, MLA, 10 Astor Place, New York, NY 10003-6981. Deadline: December 5,1989

Call for Papers

The Canadian Council for Multicultural and Intercultural Education Fourth Annual Conference will take place in Ottawa, Ontario from November 24-26,1990. The theme is "Multicultural, Intercultural, and Race Relations Education: taking Ownership." Educators, community representives, researchers... are invited to submit proposals. The abstracts should be no longer than one page and should summarize the title, content, type of presentation (speech, seminar, workshop, etc.), and length. Send abstracts to: Andrew J. Krawczk, Program Chair, Race Relations Consultant, Vancouver School Board, 1595 West 10, Vancouver, B.C., V6T 1Z8. Deadline: November 30,1989

Easing the Transition from High School to College

A workshop series on real life uses for research

In a recent research project entitled Easing the Transition, a team of high school and college teacher-researchers have gathered interview data on students' experiences of the transition from high school to college. This workshop series is designed to enable teachers to use these research results to devise more effective strategies for preparing high school students for the role of college student and assisting college students to learn that new role. Participants will be encouraged to assess the effects of their innovative strategies by carrying out research in their own classrooms.

Secondary V and college teachers of all disciplines are eligible to participate. Enrollment is limited to 24. Participants may be eligible to receive one PERFORMA credit. For information, call Margaret Waller, Project Coordinator, 457-6610, ext. 386.

Literacy Across the Curriculum Workshops Winter 1990

January 9-10, 1990
Developing Guides Across the Disciplines to Help Students Read More Effectively
Leader: Harvey S. Wiener,
City University of New York

January 11-12,1990
Developing Brief Writing Assignments That Defy Plagiarism
(e.g. Microthemes, Test Questions)
Leader: John C. Bean, Seattle University

February 9-10, 1990
Informal Writing to Learn
Leader: Toby Fulwiler,
University of Vermont

March 9, 1990
Thinking, Reasoning, and Writing
Leader: Elaine P. Maimon,
Queen's College, CUNY

Also Barbara Walvoord on writing and thinking in science, dates t.b.a.

Place : Dawson College,
Atwater Campus
Multi-purpose Room, 5-B16

Some workshops are designed as single credit PERFORMA courses. Full details available this month. Call for information, 931-8731, local 1409.

Announcements
National/International

National Council of Teachers of English Annual Conference
"Celebrating Diversity"
Baltimore, Maryland
November 17-22,1989

MLA 1989
Sheraton Washington & Washington Hilton
Washington, D.C.
December 27-30,1989

CCCC Winter Workshop on Teaching Composition to Undergraduates
Sheraton Sand Key Resort
Clearwater Beach, Florida
January 5-7,1990
Topics:
Literacy and Cross-Cultural Traditions
Meeting the Literacy Challenge
Evaluating Writing in Contemporary Contexts

Reading '90
"Language and Learning"
York University
4700 Keele Street, North York,
Ontario M3J 1P3 (416) 736-5025
February 14-16, 1990

National Association for Developmental Education (NADE) 14th Annual Conference including The International Forum on Access to Higher Education
Westin Hotel at Copley Place
Boston, MA
February 28 - March 3,1990

Conference on College Composition and Communication
Chicago, IL
March 21-24,1990

NATE Annual Conference
"Encompassing the Curriculum"
University of Manchester
April 9-11,1990

Springboards 1990
Theme: Faces of Literacy
Montreal Convention Centre
April 19-20, 1990
This year Springboards will host the Laurentian Regional Conference of the International Reading Association

Special Education '90
York University
4700 Keele Street, North York
Ontario M3J 1P3 (416) 736-5025
May 3-4, 1990

Mathematics '90
York University
4700 Keele Street, North York
Ontario M3J 1P3 (416) 736-5025
May 24- 25, 1990

Association of Canadian Community Colleges Rendezvous '90
Holland College
Charlottetown, P.E.I.
May 28-30,1990

National Project on Computers and College Writing Conference
June 1-3, 1990
Vista Hotel
New York, NY

Details available in the Centre, 514-931-8731, local 1415.

Literacy Across the Curriculum is published five times during the academic year by The QAAL/Dawson College Centre for Literacy in the Schools and the Community.

Single subscription	$ 7.50
Multiple subscription (10)	$30.00
Multiple subscription (20)	$54.00

To subscribe, complete this form and mail it with your cheque to:

The Centre for Literacy
Dawson College
3040 Sherbrooke Street West
Montreal, Quebec, Canada, H3Z 1A4

I enclose a cheque for: $ 7.50 / $30.00 / $54.00

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On multiple orders outside Montreal, please add $3.00 additional postage.

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